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WALTER SCOTT’S

MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER

AND THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURAL MEMORY

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The University of Edinburgh

2014
Thesis Declaration

I certify that this thesis has been composed by me, that the work is my own and all sources of information have been specifically acknowledged, and that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Lucy MacRae

October 2014
Abstract

“Their memory, therefore, lived in the traditions of the country.”

(MSB 1803; 2: 260)

As editor of the ballad collection *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-3), Walter Scott sought to salvage and preserve the cultural memory of the Border region, rescuing “popular superstitions, and legendary history, which, if not now collected, must soon have been totally forgotten” (MSB 1802; 1: cix). Scott’s endeavour was inspired by the movement towards cultural nationalism, which in Scotland, as in a wider European context, saw interest in traditional material reinvigorated by a widespread zeal to recover, polish and publish ‘relics’ of localised, oral culture perceived to be threatened by the rapid march of modernity.

This thesis is a study on the theme of memory in the *Minstrelsy*. Under examination are the personal and cultural memories from which Scott synthesised his seminal ballad collection, as well as the internal memorial dynamics of the *Minstrelsy* itself. The social, material and mental dimensions of Posner’s semiotic model of culture (Posner 1991), may also be seen to constitute the three main components of the term ‘cultural memory’, a metaphor for the memorial symbols and practices through which social groups define and maintain their cultural identity. A recent definition of the term interprets cultural memory as “the sum of all processes […] which are involved in the interplay of past and present within sociocultural contexts” (Erll 2011: 101).
The *Minstrelsy* is a composite text in which ballad versions gathered from a range of oral and written sources are framed by Scott’s editorial commentary. This convergence of media means that the collection itself may be understood as a memorial, or ‘site of memory’ which symbolises a particular version of the past (Nora 1989). Through the editorial commentary, Scott was able to negotiate the transmission of cultural knowledge concerning the past of the Borders as well as the wider Scottish nation.

The aims of this research are twofold. The first is to achieve a deeper understanding of the cultural contexts surrounding the creation of the *Minstrelsy*. The second is to contribute to the swiftly developing area of cultural memory studies through a focus on the editorial interpretation of oral tradition in the case of this canonical ballad collection. To this end, memoirs, correspondence and ballad manuscripts are drawn upon to investigate the layered memory culture of traditional songs, narratives, images and places through which Scott sifted during the compilation of the collection. The thesis is structured to represent a gradual widening in scope from the personal to the collective, throughout which it is argued that Scott’s editing of the *Minstrelsy* may be aligned with a mediated memorial practice that actively shapes the identity of the culture which he as editor sought to preserve.
Table of Contents

Preface and Acknowledgements 7
List of Figures 8
List of Tables 11
List of Maps 12
Abbreviations 13
A Note on the Texts and Sources 14
Introduction 17

Making the *Minstrelsy*: an Overview 22
The *Minstrelsy* and Cultural Memory 45
Chapter Outline 47

Chapter 1. Survey of Previous Scholarship 51

*Minstrelsy* Scholarship 51
Ballads and the Oral Tradition 62
Conclusions 64

Chapter 2. Memory Theory 67

Cultural Memory Studies 69
Personal Memory and Autobiographical Recollection 79
Conclusions 80

Chapter 3. “Family Legends”: Scott and Generational Memory 82

Introduction 82
The *Memoir* and the Scotts of Sandyknowe 83
Reading, Remembering, Reciting 90
Margaret Swinton, Anne Rutherford and Christian Rutherford 96
Margaret Swinton 96
Anne Rutherford 101
Christian Rutherford 103
Ballad References in the “Jessie” letters, c. 1788-1792. 104
Conclusions 108

Chapter 4. The Shortreed Memoir 110

Introduction 110
Robert Shortreed and his Family 110
Robert Shortreed’s Account 114
Shortreed and the Minstrelsy Ballads 120
The Liddesdale “Raids” 128
Dr John Elliot of Cleuch-head and Caw’s Poetical Museum 135
Hermitage Castle, “famous in Border history & tradition” 145
Conclusions 150

Chapter 5. The Recollections of William Laidlaw and James Hogg 154
Introduction 154
Laidlaw’s Recollections of Sir Walter Scott 157
Sites of Memory 169
Blackhouse Tower and “The Douglas Tragedy” 170
The Annan Street Stone and “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow” 182
Henderland and “The Lament of the Border Widow” 191
Disputed Memories: Hogg, “Auld Maitland” and the Minstrelsy 197
Conclusions 208

Chapter 6. A Sense of Place 209
Introduction 209
Local Attachments 213
Memory and Association 221
Sense of Place and the Minstrelsy Ballads 226
Places and the Imitation Ballads 242
Conclusions 253

Chapter 7. “That Storied Vicinity”: Sites of Memory and Remediation 255
Introduction 255
Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Recollections of a tour made in Scotland, A.D. 1803” 260
Washington Irving at Abbotsford, August 1817 269
The Reflections of Elizabeth Grant and Henry Cockburn 277
J. M. W. Turner’s Visit and the Minstrelsy Illustrations, 1831 279
Conclusions 282

Conclusion 287

Bibliography 294
Printed and Web Sources 294
Manuscripts 320

Appendices
Appendix 1. Data Table Sample, “The Outlaw Murray” (MSB 1) 322
Appendix 2. Settlement of Dr John Elliot’s Property 326
Appendix 3. Published Paper 333
Preface and Acknowledgements

The writing of this thesis was made possible by a scholarship from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) which, together with the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) sponsored the “Walter Scott Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border Project” of which I have been a team member for the past three years. I am very grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this exciting research project, led by Dr Sigrid Rieuwerts, which is being carried out jointly between the University of Edinburgh and the Johannes Gutenberg Universität, Mainz, with the aim of producing the first critical edition of Scott’s Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border. In concordance with this forthcoming edition, the Minstrelsy ballads in the present thesis have been numbered according to the order of their inclusion in the collection, and these numbers are given after the ballad titles in order to aid identification.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors for their guidance and advice over the past three years: Dr Katherine Campbell, Dr Emily Lyle and Dr Sigrid Rieuwerts. Each has brought their own areas of expertise to bear on my research and I am particularly appreciative of the generosity with which they have shared their knowledge and experience with me over the past three years. I would also like to thank members of the project’s steering committee, especially Professor Penny Fielding of the University of Edinburgh and Professors David Hewitt and Alison Lumsden of the University of Aberdeen, for their friendly encouragement and constructive feedback from which I have benefitted over the course of the project.
As well as being aided by the considerable expertise of the assembled team members during the course of my PhD, my being a member of the project team has also enabled me to gain valuable experience in carrying out certain tasks, such as the initial compilation of a source bibliography for the texts Scott himself consulted in creating the *Minstrelsy*, and a database of the people involved in various stages of the collection’s publication history. This work has enabled me to gain a deeper insight into the inner workings of the collection and its creation, as well as augmenting my experience in working with manuscripts, databases, library catalogues and genealogical records.

Staff members at the National Library of Scotland, the National Register of Archives for Scotland and Edinburgh University Library have been of great assistance to me in the course of my research. In particular, I am thankful to Dr Paul Barnaby, editor of the Walter Scott Digital Archive at Edinburgh University Library, for his expertise in sourcing manuscripts, images and texts and for answering a myriad of small queries, and to Lindsey Levy, formerly of the Advocates’ Library, who enabled me to consult many of Scott’s original books in the Abbotsford Library.

Alongside this project I have been committed to bringing Scott’s work and the ballads to a wider, non-academic audience, and in the process have benefited greatly from the companionship of Dr Kaye McAlpine, who has accompanied me on many of my own “Liddesdale Raids” and whose intricate knowledge of Border history, replete with many a grisly detail, brought the past of the “debatable land” alive. In a similar vein, ballad singers Naomi Harvey, Kathy Hobkirk, Elsa Lemaitre and Henry Douglas all ensured I kept in mind
precisely why these beautiful and powerful ballads are still sung and enjoyed today.

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to many of the staff at the department of Celtic and Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh, who welcomed me into the department when I first arrived as a Master’s student in the autumn of 2009, and without whose enthusiasm, inspiration and encouragement I would not have considered further postgraduate study. Thanks are also due to Arnot MacDonald, Librarian, Christine Lennie, Departmental Secretary, and Caroline Milligan, who was always willing to help me source material in the departmental sound archives.

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# List of Figures

## Chapter Four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Castleton Parish, Horse Tax Register</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Extracts from “Dick o’ the Cow”</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hermitage Castle, Frontispiece for the <em>Minstrelsy</em></td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Walter Scott, by Henry Raeburn, 1808</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Walter Scott, by Henry Raeburn, 1809</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Robert Shortreed’s Gravestone</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter Five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>William Laidlaw’s Gravestone</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Blackhouse Farm</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Blackhouse Tower</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Glebe Stone, Yarrow</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Warrior’s Rest stone, Yarrow</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>19th Century Drawing of the Yarrow Stone</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The Yarrow Stone Today</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dryhope Tower</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Alleged Grave of Cockburn of Henderland</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter Six

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Grave Marker of Johnie Armstrong</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Nine-Stane Rig</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter Seven

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Rhymer’s Glen</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Turner, Johnie Armstrong’s Tower (c. 1832)</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Turner, Hermitage Castle (1834)</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Turner, Smailholm Tower (1834)</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables

Chapter Four

Table 1. Ballads mentioned in Shortreed’s Account 122

Chapter Five

Table 2. Comparisons of “Lord Douglas’s Tragedy” (MS 877) and the Minstrelsy version of “The Douglas Tragedy” 176-178

Chapter Six

Table 3. Minstrelsy ballads drawn from the Brown MSS 216-217
Maps

Chapter Four

Map 1. Castleton Parish  127
Map 2. “The Road from Edinburgh to Carlisle, continued”  137

Chapter Five

Map 3. Yarrow Parish  168

Chapter Six

Map 4. “A Platt of the Opposete Border of Scotland”  230
Map 5. The Border Marches of the 16th Century  231
Abbreviations


*MSB*: Scott, Sir Walter. *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. (Followed by publication date, volume and page number. Non-italics denotes ballad numbering system.)

*NLS*: National Library of Scotland.


*RCAHMS*: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.


A Note on the Texts and Sources

The *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* is not a single entity, but a miscellany, the form of which developed over the course of several editions and nearly three decades. Such revisions may provide insights into the ‘re-membering’ process of the collection’s compilation which cannot be gained through exclusive reference to one version of the text, for example Henderson’s edition of 1902 which will be discussed Chapter One.

In the following study, reference is made to the earliest possible edition of the *Minstrelsy*, with data being cross-checked against subsequent editions. Such an approach ensures greater accuracy as regards the history of the collection, and provides an enhanced understanding of the methods by which Scott accumulated and represented information gathered from a wide network of correspondents. The extent of editing to which Scott subjected the ballad material over the publication history also becomes clear, and may be drawn upon for evidence of Scott’s on-going research as well as the personal or self-referential aspects of the ballad collection. An insight may therefore be gained into the development of Scott’s own mental landscape, whilst also addressing the distillation and refinement of certain ‘sites of memory’: locations, objects or past events which increased or waned in symbolic importance throughout successive editions. During the research process, this information was initially gathered through the creation of a table which analysed these changes in each ballad across all editions; a sample of this table given in Appendix 1.
In the case of secondary texts, however, I have generally consulted the most recent editorial editions. The *Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels* offers unsurpassed scholarship and unless explicitly stated, these editions of Scott’s novels and poems have been referred to in the following study. In the same vein, the 1902 Edinburgh edition of J. G. Lockhart’s *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (hereafter ‘Lockhart’), has been consistently used throughout, in order to reflect the most comprehensive and easily accessible edition. All Scots language definitions have been drawn from the *Dictionary of the Scots Language*, edited by Susan Rennie, online.¹ Unless stated otherwise, all other translations are my own. All reference to Shakespeare’s works are to the Arden edition.

Consultation of Scott’s original source materials for the *Minstrelsy* in the National Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS) has frequently been necessary in order to gain insights into the process of the *Minstrelsy*’s creation, and to ascertain the level of mediation involved in the ballad case studies. Although Scott’s practice of removing ballad versions from the letters in which they were sent to him places some difficulties in the path of the researcher, two manuscript collections held in the NLS are of particular interest and will be referred to frequently throughout this study. These are MS 877 “Scotch Ballads, Materials for Border Minstrelsy” and MS 893, which contains further ballad copies and correspondence. Scott’s voluminous correspondence has also proved to be a vital source of contextual information. Grierson’s centenary edition has constituted the main source for Scott’s letters, with manuscript

¹ http://www.dsl.ac.uk.
material used in addition where necessary. The Millgate Union catalogue of Scott’s correspondence compiled by Jane Millgate, available online,\(^2\) has proved an invaluable tool in tracking these sources down.

\(^2\) Available online through the National Library of Scotland’s website: http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/resources/scott/index.cfm.
Introduction

Gathering together diverse material relating to balladry, Border history and traditional lore in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-3), Walter Scott presented the collection as a vessel for the preservation of the Border region’s past. Recognising the traditional function of the ballads in maintaining the recollections of past events in the region’s collective consciousness, Scott claimed to have drawn many of the songs from “aged persons, in the recesses of the border mountains, [who] frequently remember and repeat the warlike songs of their fathers.” (*MSB* 1802; 1: ci.) These ballads and their surrounding lore may be held to embody a distinctive ‘cultural memory’, a phrase understood in the present study as a metaphor for the memorial symbols and commemorative practices through which societies both maintain and project their communal identity and continuity. Although Scott described the *Minstrelsy* to Henry Scott, Duke of Buccleuch, to whom he dedicated the collection, as “a small work containing these old poems with the necessary historical illustrations” (Scott to Henry Scott, Duke of Buccleuch, 19 Jun. 1800; *SL* 1: 100), the *Minstrelsy* is in fact a cornucopian collection in which literary and oral sources overlap and coalesce, and in which the ballad material itself is framed by Scott’s extensive introductions, annotations and footnotes.

The collection may be aligned with the phenomenon of cultural nationalism which had been gathering momentum over the course of the preceding century. The political union of Scotland and England in 1707 may have marked “ane end o’ ane auld sang”, as the Earl of Seafield famously
remarked (Ferguson 1968: 4, 53),

but as the 18th century progressed, enthusiasm for ballad collection, translation and imitation in Scotland, as in the rest of Europe, reached an all-time high. Contemporary schools of thought concerning the inevitability of progress and societal advancement integral to the Scottish Enlightenment were accompanied by a perception of an ever-increasing gulf between the past and the present. In the first half of the 18th century the popularity of Allan Ramsay’s collections *The Tea-Table Miscellany* (1723) and *The Evergreen* (1724) point towards a growing interest in vernacular songs and literature, which would gather momentum over the following decades and would arguably reach its peak in the literary output of Robert Burns (1759-1796). As he was deeply involved in the collection and rearrangement of traditional material, Burns’s collaboration with James Johnson and George Thomson was instrumental in the formation of national song collections which would serve as ‘museums’ for the preservation of an older Scottish identity. Such acts of preservation were synonymous with practices of editorial improvement and fresh artistic creation which would also become associated with 19th century romanticism.

In a recent study of the cultivation of cultural nationalism in Europe, Joep Leerssen has identified three types of endeavour: salvage, fresh productivity, and propagandist proclamation. (Leerssen 2005: 25.) While the first two components of Leerssen’s model were clearly involved in the creation of the *Minstrelsy*, in which Scott sought to rescue and indeed repair the relics

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3 This was a phrase which Scott would refresh in the collective memory through Bradwardine’s comment to Edward Waverley following the Jacobite defeat at Culloden towards the end of *Waverley* (see Scott 2008 [1814]: 323).
of the past as well as refresh the genre with modern imitations, the third element of propagandist proclamation is never overtly stated. In the introduction, Scott’s statement of intent is tactfully couched in unionist sentiment, forming a plea for distinction rather than separation: “[b]y such efforts […] I may contribute somewhat to the history of my native country; the peculiar features of whose manners and characters are daily melting and dissolving into her sister and ally.” (MSB 1802; 1: cix.)

The scholarly, historical approach which generally characterises the editorial commentary in Scott’s Minstrelsy owed much to the classes Scott attended at Edinburgh University, which had given him a firm grounding in enlightenment history. From Alexander Fraser Tytler’s lectures on universal history between 1790-91, Scott imbibed what Johnson has described as Tytler’s “uncompromisingly deterministic” views on the progress of civilisation, the power of inheritance and institutional authority (Johnson 1970; 1: 75). In the introduction to the Minstrelsy, Scott characterised 15th and 16th century Borderers as “a rude people” (MSB 1802; 1: xci) and described how their uncivilised way of life was a crucial factor in the production of the ballads, stating “[t]he more rude and wild the state of society the more general and violent is the impulse received from poetry and music.” (MSB 1802; 1: xc.) While the disjointed form of the Minstrelsy ballads could be held up as an indicator of their great age, the material also required careful editorial treatment in order to prove acceptable to the inhabitants of the modern

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4 This passage clearly echoes Charlotte Brooke’s comment regarding Ireland in Reliques of Irish Poetry: “The British muse is not yet informed that she has an elder sister in this isle” (Brooke 1789: vii).
“polished nation” to whom the Minstrelsy were offered, with many of the
ballads appearing in print for the first time (MSB 1802; 1: xc).

This study examines the Minstrelsy through the prism of memory,
offering a fresh critical perspective on a well-known but generally under-
studied collective text. The thesis title alludes to the memory theorist Ann
Rigney’s concept of the dynamics of cultural memory, a phrase which
encompasses “the complex communicative processes by which images of the
past are formed and transformed” (Rigney 2004: 361). In this regard, the
present study aims to go beyond comparative analysis of ballad texts, instead
seeking to locate and investigate the layers of recollection integral to the
collection’s formation. As well as contributing to our understanding of the
creation of this collective text, the present research also seeks to contribute to
the field of ballad studies and ethnological enquiry by augmenting our
understanding of the memorial dynamics at work in the editing and
interpretation of cultural traditions more generally.

The sociologist Iwona Irwin-Zarecka’s statement that “a collective
memory is best located not in the minds of people, but in the resources they
share” (Irwin-Zarecka 1994: 4) resonates throughout the underlying framework
of this study, in which it is suggested that both traditional ballads and their
surrounding lore may constitute one such cultural reservoir. Indeed, modern
ballad scholarship has recognised the way ballads exist within webs of cultural
meaning. As Barre Toelken has described, “…the performance touches off or
stimulates or creates a rich constellation of culturally significant issues in the
minds of the active listeners, and this is where the focus of meaning is located.”
(Toelken, in Constantine and Porter 2003: viii). Mary-Ann Constantine’s incisive comment on Breton ballads holds true for the historical ‘Border’ ballads which make up an important section of the *Minstrelsy*, in that the songs constituted the historical identity of the region from which they came and “a large part of the present meaning for the singers themselves lay (and still lies) precisely in their sense of the songs as pieces of their history” (Constantine 1996: 40). Taking into account the regional lore of which Scott became aware in the years shortly before and immediately after the collection’s publication, it is clear that Scott himself built up sites of particular rhetorical concentration. Such ‘memory spaces’, as we might term them, could range from a ballad sung by an elderly shepherd, notches on a stick pulled from a tree at a site deemed to be historically significant, a ruined castle or a desolate former battlefield.

The investigation centres upon the three main tenets of cultural memory: people, place and the past, and seeks to address three key questions. First, from what form or forms of memory was the *Minstrelsy* drawn? Second, how does the *Minstrelsy* act as a medium of cultural memory? Third, to what extent can the *Minstrelsy* itself be viewed as a ‘site of memory’? These broad questions will be addressed in successive chapters which examine a selection of correspondence and memoirs which shed light on the layered nature of the cultural memories which Scott encountered during the compilation of the collection. This information may then be compared with the editorial redeployment and reinterpretation of this material within the *Minstrelsy* itself. The final section will examine the reinvestment process whereby we may see
the *Minstrelsy* itself functioning as a site of memory integral to Scott’s portrayals of the lore of the Border region.

**Making the *Minstrelsy*: An Overview**

Scott was aware of, and understood, the inner workings of oral tradition from a very early age. Through the tales of an ancestral past told by his paternal grandparents at Sandyknowe Farm near Kelso, or by his mother and maternal great-aunt at the hearth in Edinburgh, Scott became accustomed to a way of life in which remembrance of the past was an everyday feature of the present, details of which will be discussed further in Chapter Three. He also became an avid reader, and during periods of immobility forced upon him by childhood spells of ill-health was allowed to spend large amounts of time with his beloved books: “my only refuge was reading and playing at chess”, as he later recalled in the *Memoir* (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 35). Scott had enjoyed Ramsay’s *Tea-Table Miscellany* (1723) from an early age, but it was his discovery of Thomas Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) which would ultimately prove most influential in providing the model after which Scott would eventually fashion the *Minstrelsy*. In his *Memoir*, Scott recalls the delight he felt on first reading the *Reliques*, when he encountered

…pieces of the same kind which had amused my childhood, and still continued in secret the Delilahs of my imagination, considered as the subject of sober research, grave commentary, and apt illustration by an editor who shewed his poetical genius was capable of emulating the best qualities of what his pious labour preserved. (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 28.)
The first intimation of Scott’s intention to publish a collection of ballads appears in a letter of 1796 from Scott to the antiquary George Chalmers, in which Scott reveals that he has been considering having a “small collection” of ballads printed (Scott to Chalmers, 17 Feb. 1796; SL 1: 44). The intervening years between 1796 and 1802 were filled with supremely significant events in Scott’s personal and professional life. Heartbroken by his rejection by Williamina Belsches, whose engagement to William Forbes was announced on 12 October 1796, Scott met Charlotte Carpenter the following July and married her in Carlisle on Christmas Eve 1797. Scott was twenty-six; Charlotte twenty-seven. In 1798 Scott took up the lease of a small country house at Lasswade, where he would spend summers until 1804. The year 1798 was also marked by the stillbirth of Scott and Charlotte’s first child, a son. In April 1799 Scott’s father died at the age of seventy, after a lingering illness. Charlotte gave birth to a daughter, Charlotte Sophia, in October, and as the year drew to a close Scott became Sheriff Depute of Selkirk in December, following the death of the previous post-holder, the amateur antiquarian Andrew Plummer. His appointment had been approved by Plummer before his death, and one of Scott’s notable supporters in his petition to Henry Dundas (who had control of the networks of crown patronage) for the position was Henry Scott, third Duke of Buccleuch, to whom the Minstrelsy would be dedicated. In October 1801, Scott’s first surviving son Walter was born: “the Laird of Gilnockie” as Scott affectionately dubbed his toddler heir, referring to the famous (or rather
infamous) Border outlaw Johnie Armstrong (see letter from Scott to Adam Ferguson, 2 Dec. 1806; SL 1: 339).\(^5\)

These years also saw Scott’s first serious attempts at authorship: translations of Bürger’s “Lenore” and “Der Wilde Jäger” (which Scott entitled “William and Helen” and “The Chase”, respectively) were published in 1796. In the spring of 1798, William Erskine showed these two poems to Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818). Lewis subsequently asked Scott to contribute to his projected two-volume collection *Tales of Wonder* and *Tales of Terror*, and he and Scott were in frequent correspondence over the next two years. In March 1799, Scott’s translation of Goethe’s *Götz von Berlichingen* was published, and proved to be his first financially successful publication. In the same year, due to delays in the publication of *Tales of Terror*, Scott decided to pre-empt Lewis’s collection by publishing the pamphlet *An Apology for Tales of Terror*. This small collection of nine poems, of which only twelve copies were printed, included “William and Helen” and “The Chase” alongside poems by Robert Southey, John Aikin and Lewis himself. The printing of the *Apology* marked the beginning of the long professional relationship between Scott and the Kelso printer James Ballantyne (1772-1833), with whom Scott had been friends since attending Kelso Grammar School in 1783.

*Tales of Wonder* was eventually published in December 1800,\(^6\) but was not well received by reviewers (see Rieuwerts 2011: 39). It contained four of Scott’s poems: “Glenfinlas”, “The Eve of St John”, “Frederick and Alice”

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\(^5\) Biographers Johnson (1970; 1: 10-155) and Sutherland (1995: 45-68) provide key information on this period of Scott’s life.

\(^6\) Lewis’s *Tales of Terror* followed in May 1801.
(modelled on a song by Goethe) and “The Fire King”. “Glenfinlas” and “The Eve of St John” would eventually appear in the *Minstrelsy*.

Throughout this period, Scott travelled into the most remote areas of Liddesdale and Teviotdale in the company of Robert Shortreed, Sheriff Substitute of Jedburgh (1761-1829), and these excursions increased both his familiarity with, and enthusiasm for, the raiding ballads which were still sung or at least remembered in some of the most remote parts of the Borders. His literary friendships with the retired diplomat and antiquarian George Ellis (1753-1815), and the bibliophile Richard Heber (1774-1833) were also highly significant, providing Scott with the impetus and momentum which resulted in the collection’s publication. It was Heber who introduced Scott to John Leyden (1775-1811) in the autumn of 1799. Over the course of the next three years, Leyden aided Scott in sourcing, procuring and transcribing ballad manuscripts for the first edition of the *Minstrelsy*, proving himself to be, in Scott’s words, “of the utmost of assistance to my literary undertakings” (Scott to George Ellis, 27 Mar. 1801; *SL* 1: 111). Leyden’s local knowledge was a valuable asset to Scott and in addition he knew many ballads through his mother, who seems to have been a significant tradition bearer (see Reith 1923: 182). A published poet in his own right at the time of meeting Scott, Leyden also turned his hand to the composition of ballad imitations.\(^7\)

By April 1800, Scott was discussing the publication of the ballads with

\(^7\) Leyden’s involvement in the early stages of the *Minstrelsy* should not be underestimated, but it is not the intention of the present study to enter into this subject in great detail, as a comprehensive assessment of Leyden’s contribution to the *Minstrelsy* is currently being undertaken by Elaine Reinhard, who is presently researching a PhD at the Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz.
James Ballantyne, writing to him that “the Ballads of the Border […] are in some forwardness” (Scott to Ballantyne, 22 Apr. 1800; *SL* 1: 96). At this stage, the ballads in question were mainly local Border ballads, and Scott evidently felt that the time was right to make contact with Percy, whose *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* had so enriched his younger years, as noted above. In October 1800, therefore, Scott wrote Percy a tactfully worded letter in which he paid homage to the *Reliques* and advised Percy of his plans, which he envisaged as

…humbly following the plan of the R. of Anct. Poetry. […] The songs are divided into two classes namely the Raiding Ballads (as they are callld) relating to the forrays & predatory incursions made upon the Borders & the Romantic or popular Ballads founded upon circumstances entirely imaginary. The former is naturally the Class about which I am most anxious—my collection of the latter is much larger than I propose to use. (Scott to Thomas Percy, 6 Oct. 1800; *SL* 12: 169-9.)

Scott was clearly partial to these tales of clan feuds, cattle raids, and cross-border conflicts between the Border reivers: the raiding families who held sway upon the Anglo-Scottish border from the 15th century up until the union of the Crowns in 1603, when James VI of Scotland inherited the crown of England and finally gained control of the Border Marches. The Borderers’ way of life during this period was governed by family loyalties, clannish protectionism and depredations upon their rivals’ property. Compiling his report for the first Statistical Accounts in 1793, the Rev. James Arkle described how his parish of Castleton, Roxburghshire, had previously been
…the scene of action, of fierce contention, barbarous feuds, and marauding expeditions, which took place between the two nations, when, before the union, and before law and civilisation took place, inroads were constantly made by both parties upon each other, and the stronger arm carried away every thing both from the house and from the field. These exploits have been recorded in the poetry of the times, which are still sung by the aged, and listened to with eagerness by the young. (Ardle, in Sinclair 1791-99; 16: 80.)

Although Arkle refers to poetry, it is clear that he is referring to songs rather than verse. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, Scott himself took no small pride in the fact that he could trace his own ancestry back to many of the characters involved, and also draw links to their modern-day counterparts. The notorious Border reiver ‘Auld Watt,’ Walter Scott of Harden (c.1563-1629) for example, was not only Scott’s ancestor but also a direct relation of Hugh Scott of Harden, later Lord Polwarth (1758-1841), Member of Parliament for Berwickshire. Hugh Scott, who took up the baronetcy in 1793, and his German wife Harriet Bruhl, were both early patrons of the young Scott, who in turn retained an enormous respect for the couple throughout his life.⁸

Upon publication in 1802, Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border: Consisting of Historical and Romantic Ballads Collected in the Southern Counties of Scotland, with a Few of Modern Date, Founded Upon Local Tradition consisted of fifty-two ballads in two volumes, subdivided into three sections: historical ballads, romantic ballads and imitations of the ancient ballad.⁹ While the historical section, initially containing twenty-two ballads, commemorated

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⁸ In his “Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad”, Scott mentions Bruhl, “whose friendship I have enjoyed for many years” and describes Hugh Scott as his “relative, and much-valued friend almost from infancy.” (MSB 1833; 4, 59.)

⁹ Joseph Ritson’s ‘historical’ and ‘romantic’ categories in Scotish Songs (1794) appear to have influenced Scott in this case.
the past of the Border region, the romantic ballad section contained twenty-six ballads which were more widely known. Scott’s initial distinction between the two categories appears to have been made on the grounds of historical fact and fiction. In the collection’s introduction, he contrasted the “border raid-ballads, the fame of which is in general confined to the mountains where they were originally composed” with the romantic ballads which held a “general, and not merely a local, interest” (MSB 1802; 1: ciii). The imitation section of the Minstrelsy consisted of only four new poems. Of these, two had been written by Scott: “The Eve of St John” (MSB 49), which Scott had already had privately printed by James Ballantyne in 1799, and “Glenfinlas, or Lord Ronald’s Coronach” (MSB 52). The remaining two, “Lord Soulis” (MSB 50) and “The Cout of Keeldar” (MSB 51) were the compositions of John Leyden.

The publishing history of this ballad collection is an important indication that the Minstrelsy was an on-going concern for Scott to which he returned at many stages of his life. Following the collection’s initial publication in 1802, the Minstrelsy would appear in four more editions during Scott’s lifetime. The most substantial alterations were carried out between the publication of the first edition in February 1802 and May 1803, when the second edition was released, and between 1803 and the publication of the third edition in November 1806. The majority of these adjustments were in place by the time the fourth edition appeared in November 1810, and included the addition of a substantial number of ballads, the expansion of the accompanying

10 For a detailed account of the full publishing history of the Minstrelsy, see Todd and Bowden, 1998: 19-35.
editorial notes and the re-classification of existing ballads which were sometimes moved several times between the collection’s historical, romantic and imitation sections. A fifth edition appeared in 1812, and in 1821 and 1825 reprints of the 1812 edition were included in the anthology *The Poetical Works of Walter Scott*. This anthology was itself republished in 1830. This edition consisted of the reprinted 1812 edition, together with the insertion of two new essays which Scott penned at Abbotsford in March and April 1830: “Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry” and “Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad”.

Aside from the poetic imitations, the majority of the material in the historical and romantic sections of the *Minstrelsy* had been created and circulated within an oral tradition. The events of the historical ballads are frequently traceable within the wild Borderlands of the 15th and 16th centuries. In the case of the romantic ballads, conversely, the past is a distant concept, linked to the fantastic and the imaginary, where archetypal experience is powerfully encapsulated and supernatural or magical elements are common. In both cases, the authors are unknown, and the ballads would have existed in a myriad different versions. Indeed, the concept of a definitive text was itself produced by the rising popularity of ballad collecting during the 18th century. Discussing the ballad genre, Emily Lyle has emphasised role of orality in shaping the ballads as they exist today:

They are anonymous as we have them, the end result of a process whereby narratives, composed by individuals whose names we do not know, were sung for centuries by people in oral environments with no
sense of a fixed text and where modifications were constantly made. […] Although we quite often know the names of the singers from whom our various versions were derived and we sometimes know the names of those from whom they learned the ballads, these are simply single points of information out of an accumulation of singers about whom we know nothing. (Lyle 2013: 15.)

This description is a pertinent reminder of the fact that these ballads circulated in fluid forms within the wider cultural memory of the regions where they were sung, and is certainly applicable as regards the extent of our knowledge about the oral sources from which the Minstrelsy were drawn. While Scott’s network of correspondents hunted for ballad versions amongst their relatives, their servants and within their own memories, Scott exercised a great deal of editorial authority, and indeed strategic partiality in deciding whose names would be preserved in print for posterity and whose would be forgotten. As a result, few of the Minstrelsy’s source singers are named within the Minstrelsy’s editorial commentary. While extant manuscripts and memoirs concerning the collection’s creation are more forthcoming and will be discussed in the following chapters, Lyle’s comment, above, reminds us of the wider anonymity of generations of singers who participated in the transmission and transformation of these songs.

Although Scott employed a network of correspondents for the purpose of hunting down ballad versions, he also used a wide selection of printed and manuscript sources.11 As noted above, Percy’s Reliques of Ancient English Poetry was tremendously influential in providing the model for Scott’s

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11 The most detailed analysis of Scott’s sources and his treatment of them is contained in Keith Harry’s unpublished PhD thesis (1975), which will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapter.
collection, although he did not use it as a source text. Other influential song
collections which were consulted by Scott include Allan Ramsay’s two
collections *The Tea-Table Miscellany* (1723) and *The Ever-Green* (1724); *Scotish Songs and Ballads* by David Herd (1774); John Pinkerton’s *Scottish
Tragic Ballads* (1781) and *Select Scottish Ballads* (1783); James Johnson’s *Scots Musical Museum* (1787-1796), to which Burns had been a major
contributor, and Joseph Ritson’s collections, *Ancient Songs* (1792) and *Scotish
Songs* (1794).

Manuscript sources for the *Minstrelsy* ballads included David Herd’s
manuscript, which Scott used as either a primary and secondary source for
ten ballads. Scott also made use of volume eleven of the Glenriddell
manuscript, entitled “A Collection of old scottish Ballads”, which Leyden
obtained in 1800 through a Carlisle bookseller named Jollie (see *MSB* 1802; 1:
cii). Originally the property of Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, a close friend of
Burns, volume eleven contains sixteen versions of fourteen ballads and poems,
of which Scott made use of seven. Another manuscript source was the
Bannatyne manuscript, or “George Bannatyne’s Manuscript Collection of
Scottish Poetry, 1568”, from which Scott drew a version of “The Raid of the
Reidswire” (MSB 8), while the romantic ballad section profited from Scott’s

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12 This manuscript is held in the British Museum, Add. MSS 22311-2.
13 “The Outlaw Murray” (MSB 1); “The Laird of Laminton” (MSB 18); “Clerk Saunders”
(MSB 28); “Earl Richard” (MSB 29); “Sir Patrick Spens” (MSB 55); “The Dowie Dens of
Yarrow” (MSB 56); “The Lass of Lochroyan” (MSB 30); “O gin my Love were yon red rose”
(MSB 47) and “The Bonny Hynd” (MSB 46) and “Lord William” (MSB 72).
14 See also letter from John Leyden to Richard Heber, 24 Apr, 1800; NLS MS 939, f.9, in
which Leyden discusses procuring the manuscript.
15 “The Sang of the Outlaw Murray” (MSB 1); “The Lochmaben Harper” (MSB 5); “Fair
Helen of Kirconnel” (MSB 6); “Archie o’ Cafield” (MSB 13); “Lord Maxwell’s Goodnight”
(MSB 16); The Lads of Wamphray (MSB 17) and “The Young Tamlane” (MSB 44).
16 NLS Adv. MS 1.1.16.
consultation of manuscripts containing the ballads of Anna Gordon, Mrs Brown of Falkland.

In general, Scott places regionality to the fore over nationalism: the *Minstrelsy* was presented as a Borders collection first, and a Scottish text second. On the other hand, the *Minstrelsy* ballads are in fact diverse in origin as well as subject. This is most noticeable in the case of Mrs Anna Brown of Falkland’s ballad manuscripts, which reflected the song traditions of the North-East of Scotland. Given that the title of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* proclaims its connection to a specific regionality, Scott’s extensive use of the Brown MSS may seem surprising. There is today a general consensus that strong encouragement from Leyden may have been a key factor in this regard (see for example Dobie 1940: 74-75; Sutherland 1995: 79). Leyden’s influence may be combined with the dual elements of the richness of Brown’s corpus and Scott’s wish to recognise the generosity of advocate and historian Alexander Fraser Tytler (1747-1813), who had made his manuscript of Brown’s ballads available to Scott.17 A further deciding factor may have been rivalry with the collector Robert Jamieson (1772-1844) who was also planning a publication based on another manuscript from the Brown MSS (see Rieuwerts 2011: 3; Dobie 1940: 73-74; Harvey Wood 1971-2: 72-73).

By his own admission, Scott was not musically gifted, but he delighted in “the airs of our native country which, imperfect as my musical ear is, make and always have made the most pleasing impression on me…” (*WS Journal*, 7

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17 The background concerning Scott’s use of the Brown MSS will be discussed further in Chapter Six.
Dec. 1825; in Anderson 1998: 35-6). He was not, therefore, indifferent to the musical dimension of the ballads. During his travels in Liddesdale with Shortreed, the two men evidently went out of their way to hear the tunes, as well as the words to the songs, as will be discussed further in Chapter Four. In a letter from Leyden to Richard Heber discussing the projected publication, Leyden states that “Scott wishes exceedingly to have the original airs of Liddisdale” (Leyden to Heber, 24 Apr. 1800; NLS 939, f.2). This may suggest that Scott may have originally considered including the music alongside the *Minstrelsy* ballad texts, although this never transpired in his lifetime. Instead, Scott reconceptualised the material with an editorial commentary that sought to emphasise and elucidate the ballads’ historical context and their capacity to evoke an innate sense of place. Susan Oliver has summed up the *Minstrelsy* as “a collection of rural ballad poetry [that] both invokes and commemorates the cultural history of the rural Scottish Borders region” (Oliver 2005: 25). However, while Scott’s *Minstrelsy* was the first ballad collection which defined itself through its specific regionality, with the title establishing its roots firmly within a local collective memory, the nation-defining implications are inherent in the area chosen. Although the border between Scotland and England was historically a place of conflict, upheaval and shifting boundaries, Scott’s *Minstrelsy* is, from the title, specifically of the ‘Scottish’ side; or, seen another way, it is a national appropriation of the border itself. As Scott presented them, the Border ballads, which had for centuries been an integral part of the oral tradition through which the inhabitants of the Scottish Borders remembered and recounted their past, were in danger of falling out of the region’s collective
memory, clinging on in the failing memories of a few “aged persons” (MSB 1802; 1: xcvii).

In a sense, Scott assumed the mantle of modern Border minstrel – a term by which he was fond of wryly referring to himself in his correspondence and memoirs – in polishing and restoring such relics of the past. In so doing, he increased not only their literary but also their commercial value. Richard Cronin has commented that collections such as the *Minstrelsy* “transform[ed] ballads freely passed from speaker to speaker around cottage fires on the Scottish Border into luxury items” (Cronin 1999: 864). The publication of the *Minstrelsy* may indeed be seen as part of the on-going ‘commercialisation’ of traditional lore. Presented to the literary marketplace as desirable commodities, the *Minstrelsy* ballads could be purchased for a considerable price (eighteen shillings, for regular copies, or one guinea for a hardbound copy)\(^\text{18}\) and the collection was well received by an educated, literary audience both north and south of the Border.\(^\text{19}\) The *Minstrelsy*’s readership included those to whom the storied landscape of the Borders needed explaining, even if the innate power of the traditional ballads and their imitations did not. Through the combination of

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\(^{18}\) See Millgate 2000: 555. 18 shillings in 1800 would be roughly equal to £18.95 today, while a guinea would now be worth approximately £33.78. (See http://apps.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/, 15/10/14.)

\(^{19}\) The first edition sold out in six months. Favourable reviews of the first edition appeared in the *Annual Review and History of Literature* (1802; 1: 635-643); the *British Critic: and Quarterly Theological Review* (1802; 19: 36-42; reviewed by George Ellis); the *Scots Magazine* (1802; 64: 68-70) and the *Edinburgh Review* (1803; 1: 395-406, reviewed by John Stoddart). The only negative notice appeared in the *Monthly Review* 1803; 42: 21-33), in which the critic Lockhart Muirhead complained, “it is now vain to allege that the illustration of the peculiarities of border manners, as they modified the feudal spirit of the times, required not much expenditure of time or paper…” (Muirhead 1803; 42: 22). Reviews of the second edition appeared in the *British Critic: and Quarterly Theological Review* (1804; 23: 36-42) and the *Annual Review and History of Literature* (1803; 2: 533-538). See Corson 1943; also Roper 1978: 251.
the ballads with their editorial commentary, this region was represented as a land rich in myth, history and song.

Following Leyden’s departure for London in December 1802, Scott’s growing friendship with William Laidlaw (1779-1845) of Blackhouse Farm in the Yarrow Valley represented an important development which followed the publication of the first edition and opened up new territory in Scott’s quest for ballads. The second expanded edition was released in May 1803 in three volumes, and many of the additions were the result of Laidlaw’s assiduous collecting in the local area, beginning with the servants who worked on Blackhouse and surrounding farms. In this close-knit community, Laidlaw’s extended family were tenants of a great many farms in the valley. It was through Laidlaw that Scott was introduced to James Hogg (1770-1835), who had at this time recently left the Laidlaw family where he had been employed as a herdsman for ten years, and was farming in Ettrick. Hogg’s contributions to the second edition were also substantial.

Even during an era in which the term “folklore” had yet to be devised (see Thoms 1846: 862-63), issues surrounding the editing of traditional material were widely debated in the 18th century due to a well-documented upsurge of popularity in collecting and translating ballads, as well as imitating their poetic form. This discourse resulted in the emergence of two distinct strands of opinion, a dichotomy which is perhaps best exemplified by the bitter vendetta between the notoriously eccentric antiquarian Joseph Ritson and

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20 Leyden sailed to Madras in the late summer of 1803 to embark on an extraordinary career as orientalist and linguist with the East India Company. He died after contracting a fever at Batavia (modern-day Jakarta) in August 1811.
21 See, for example, Hustvedt, 1930; Fielding, 1996; McLane, 2001.
Thomas Percy over the question of ballad authorship, minstrel origins and editorial methods. Anxiety surrounding issues of authenticity had also seeped into the literary sphere; following the publication of Thomas Chatterton’s medieval forgeries and James Macpherson’s Ossian poems in the 1760s, no self-respecting editor could remain unaware of the public scrutiny to which publications that claimed to be harvested from traditional sources were likely to be subjected. Scott’s collection was published and circulated amongst literary circles in whose minds the exposure of Chatterton’s deception and the Ossian controversy were still fresh. Still closer to home was John Pinkerton, who was not above passing off his own creations as traditional material. Many of the ‘tragic ballads’ came from his own pen, and he also wrote a second part of the ballad “Hardyknute” in order to present a “complete” version (Pinkerton 1783). Pinkerton’s fraudulence was denounced by the English antiquarian Joseph Ritson in withering terms, although Pinkerton himself did not admit to the extent of his own creation until 1786 with the publication of Ancient Scottish Poems. “Hardyknute”, Lady Elizabeth Wardlaw’s famous ballad forgery, was a ballad close to Scott’s heart and it retained a very special place in his memory. As he inscribed in his copy of The Tea-Table Miscellany, “this book belonged to my grandfather, Robert Scott, and out of it I was taught Hardyknute by heart before I could read the ballad myself. It was the first poem I ever learnt – the last I shall ever forget.” (Lockhart 1902; 1: 88.)

22 Critics such as Fielding (1996, 2008); Stewart (1991) and Trumpener (1997) have drawn attention to the anxiety of authenticity, cultural nationalism and the use of the symbol of the bard or minstrel.
23 Elizabeth Wardlaw, née Halket (1677-1727), had her pseudo-antique ballad “Hardyknute” printed anonymously in 1719. The ballad concerned the Battle of Largs in 1263 (see Brown 2004).
Scott, who corresponded with both Percy and Ritson, and entertained Ritson at his summer residence in Lasswade in September 1801, sought to steer a conciliatory course between two antiquarians whose approaches appear to have been diametrically opposed to each other (see Hustvedt 1930: 21-49). He is more open about his editorial emendations than Percy, for instance, but less antagonistic than Ritson, and avoids addressing the question of minstrel origins directly. However, certain hints within the *Minstrelsy*’s editorial notes (such as the reference to “the author” in the quote below) suggest that Scott followed Percy’s theory of singular, ‘minstrel’ composition of the ballads to which Ritson strongly objected. The theories of communal folk composition preferred by Ritson, which originated in German philological thought, would gather more supporters as the 19th century progressed. The *Minstrelsy* appeared to meet with the approval of both men, although whether Ritson would have perused the collection in great depth is doubtful, as both his physical and mental health were in terminal decline by the time Scott sent him a copy of the collection following publication (see Sutherland 1995: 86).

In the collection’s introduction, Scott apparently sought to marry an awareness of the workings of oral tradition with literary aesthetics. His emphasis on the fallible nature of human memory in the passage below, for example, allowed him to usher in a justification for editorial emendations:

No liberties have been taken either with the recited or written copies of

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24 Johnston (1964) gives a detailed account of the Percy / Ritson controversy as well as a detailed account of Scott’s engagement with the two men.
25 See Rieuwerts (1996: 221-226) for a discussion of the concept of the *Volksballade* in German philological tradition.
these ballads, farther than that, where they disagreed, the editor, in justice to the author, has uniformly preserved what seemed to him the best or most poetical reading of the passage. Such discrepancies must very frequently occur, wherever poetry is preserved by oral tradition; for the reciter, making it a uniform principle to proceed at all hazards, is very often, when his memory fails him, apt to substitute large portions from some other tale, altogether distinct from that which he is commenced. Besides, the prejudices of clans and of districts have occasioned variations in the mode of telling the same story. (MSB 1802; 1: cii-ciii)

Throughout the Minstrelsy’s editorial commentary, however, Scott openly declared that he had assembled his ballad material through a process of collation from literary, manuscript and oral sources, and also that he had made subjective editorial decisions in line with literary standards. In fact, as will be discussed further on, comparisons between the Minstrelsy texts and extant manuscript material used by Scott and his colleagues suggest that he frequently understated his editorial involvement.

The Minstrelsy is a place of convergence of a variety of medial forms. Editorial interpretations of traditional ballads and newly composed poems are framed by notes and essays which draw on information from local lore, historical pamphlets and enlightenment histories. The ballads and the editorial commentary exist in a symbiotic relationship, the one informing the other. The exchange can be fluid; we can neither say that the history provided in the Minstrelsy routinely reinvents the ballad, nor the other way around. Editorial mediation is therefore evident not only within the texts of the ballads themselves, but also in the accompanying editorial paratext, a charged space which literary theorist Gerard Genette has described as “a zone not only of transition but also of transaction; a privileged place of a pragmatics and a
strategy, of an influence of the public” (Genette 1997: 2; original italics). As will be seen during the course of this study, Scott used essays, introductions, footnotes and endnotes to frame and ‘explain’ the ballads, setting them in a specific place and time. These commentaries frequently extend to far greater lengths than the song material itself. As Penny Fielding has remarked, “Scott is concerned to show off the ballads, yet he displays a marked reluctance to let them speak for themselves.” (Fielding 1996: 51.) In *Romantic Marginality*, Alex Watson’s recent in-depth study of the authorial use of paratexts in 18th century writing, Watson places the phenomenon centre-stage, showing how paratexts may become sites of “confrontational transactions” (Watson 2012: 3). Such confrontations can problematise the notion of single authorial intention, and can also possess wider nationalistic and imperialistic overtones. Disruptive voices may be relegated to the borders of the page, becoming indicative of what Watson has identified as

… a profound shift in the readers’ geopolitical identities – as the local is absorbed in the national […] [t]he margins of Romantic-period texts are marked by a profusion of ethnographic, linguistic and anthropological details about the very communities – Scots, Irish, ‘Hindoo’ and ‘Oriental’ – that the emerging modern imperial British nation-state was seeking to absorb. (Watson 2012: 5-6.)

Watson’s observations take on a particular resonance when considered alongside the closing passage of the *Minstrelsy*’s introduction, in which Scott describes his own approach to the notes and essays as disordered, even haphazard:
In the notes, and occasional dissertations, it has been my object to throw together, perhaps without sufficient attention to method, a variety of remarks regarding popular superstitions, and legendary history, which, if not now collected, must soon have been totally forgotten. (MSB 1802; 1: cix.)

Despite Scott’s characteristic mode of self-deprecation, which exemplifies the light tone with which he would consistently revert to when summing up his own antiquarian endeavours, political, familial and local partialities furnish this ballad collection’s editorial commentary. The notes and dissertations within the Minstrelsy teem with chronicle-histories; ancient legal documents and seals rub shoulders with Jacobean dramas and chapbooks and jostle for page space amid accounts ostensibly drawn from traditional lore, topographical descriptions of the Borders landscape, and, not infrequently, from Scott’s own prodigious memory when the exact reference was not immediately to hand. After this apparently self-effacing assessment of his editorial skill, the tone of the closing lines of the Minstrelsy’s introduction is deadly serious and carries an understated emotional charge: “trivial as may appear such an offering, to the manes of a kingdom, once proud and independent, I hang it upon her altar with a mixture of feelings, which I shall not attempt to describe.” (MSB 1802; 1: cix.) We are reminded of Lockhart’s account of Scott’s passionate outburst following a debate at the Faculty of Advocates in 1806 discussing some of the propositions of the newly formed Whig coalition government. 26 In the company of Francis Jeffrey and some other friends in favour of the reforms, the

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26 This government, or “the ministry of all the talents”, was formed in February 1806, following the death of the prime minister William Pitt the Younger.
conversation had taken a playful turn, when Scott gave vent to his own feelings:

“No, no – ’tis no laughing matter; little by little, whatever your wishes may be, you will destroy and undermine until nothing of what makes Scotland Scotland shall remain.” And so saying, he turned round to conceal his agitation – but not until Mr Jeffrey saw tears gushing down his cheek – resting his head until he recovered himself on the wall of the Mound. (Lockhart 1902; 2: 284-5.)

In the *Minstrelsy*, Scott’s reassembling and reinterpretation of such diverse material grounded the ballads firmly in the history of a separate Scotland, and aimed to guard against forgetting.

History and memory, therefore, are intertwined within this collection, as a letter written to the poet Anna Seward (1747-1809) on the day on which the second edition of the *Minstrelsy* was published makes clear. Using the metaphor of ready-made clothing, Scott described his use of the ballads both as a source of historical knowledge and as a model on which he could drape his own historical interpretation. To Seward, who had made no secret of her disdain for the ballad genre, Scott wrote the following:

There are a good many old ballads particularly those of the covenanters which in point of composition are mere drivelling trash. They are however curious in a historical point of view & have enabled me to slide in a number of notes about that dark & bloody period of Scottish history. There is a vast convenience to an editor in a tale upon which without the formality of adapting the notes very precisely to the shape & form of the ballad, he may hang on a set like a heralds coat without sleeves saving himself the trouble of taking measure & sending forth
the tale of ancient time ready equipd... (Scott to Anna Seward, 25 May 1803; SL 1: 180).27

Scott presented the ballads and their semantic context as a jumble of precious fragments resting on the edge of memory, in immediate danger of fading from the present body of recollection. However, many of the Minstrelsy ballads, particularly those in the romantic section, were in contemporary circulation within the memories of singers during the 18th century, and were also spread as part of a vigorous print culture in the form of broadsides and chapbooks.28 As Scott himself admitted to his bibliophile correspondent Richard Heber concerning his correspondence with the ballad collector Robert Jamieson:

...my heart being chiefly set upon the Border raid Ballads I was less anxious about those which are merely romantick & popular of which I believe an attentive Collector who would collect from recitation in the pastoral parts of the Country & not from Libraries in great towns might still recover a very great number indeed. (Scott to Richard Heber, 19 Oct. 1800; SL 12: 173.)

Two years later, just ten days before the publication of the Minstrelsy on 24 February, Scott expressed concern that the ballads would not be ancient enough to please his friend, the retired diplomat and antiquarian George Ellis. The ballads, he implied, were part of a relatively recent tradition rather than the medieval relics that might usually interest his friend: “I think you will be disappointed in the Ballads, I have as yet touched very little on the more

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27 Grierson gives the date of this letter as March 1803; Corson’s suggestion of May 25 is adopted by Millgate (see Corson 1979: 13; also Millgate Union Catalogue: http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/resources/scott/index.cfm).
remote antiquities of the Border, which, indeed, my songs, all comparatively modern, did not lead me to discuss.” (Scott to George Ellis, 14 Feb. 1802; SL 1: 133.)

As Scott had been well aware since childhood, many of the *Minstrelsy* ballads circulated in a largely oral tradition maintained and communicated by members of the older generation. In his correspondence, he described “…the poetical antiquities of the Border Counties where the old people had preserved many ballads & ancient songs descriptive of the manners of the country during the wars with England” (Scott to Charles Carpenter, 6 Mar. 1803; SL 1: 176). In the *Minstrelsy*, Scott proclaims the collection’s connections to orality, regionality, and memory, yet encloses the ballad material within a literary and historical discourse. The past of the “debatable land” of the Border between Scotland and England (although notably “the Scottish Border” in the title of the *Minstrelsy*) is interpreted through the presentation of the ballads interpolated by extensive notes and “occasional dissertations” upon oral tradition and history (*MSB* 1802; 1: cix). The resultant multi-faceted collection recounted a collective narrative of regional identity, but it is an identity which defies easy categorisation on a national level. The lore of the Border region between Scotland and England, upon which regional, familial and national disputes raged for centuries, is frequently bound up in the ballads which are held to commemorate this past. Damien Wallford Davies’s description of the Wye Valley as a “haunted, liminal space […] which fostered a disruptive but educative historical awareness” (Davies 2002: 241) in the minds of poets and writers such as Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats, may also be seen to have
parallels with the border between Scotland and England. In both cases, the violent and troubled past of these border regions and their cultural history may be cast as sites in which Romanticism came face to face with in a negotiation between and history.

The Border region of the Minstrelsy simultaneously epitomises Scottish identity and is also presented as a province apart, home to a societal group who exist on the threshold of these two nations and who the landscape by turning the austere and challenging topography to their own advantages. In Romanticism’s Debatable Lands, Claire Lamont and Michael Rossington emphasise the “romantic appeal” of disputed territories and their alternative and localised laws” (Lamont and Rossington 2007: 6). The Border reivers: Scotts, Armstrongs, Elliiots, Johnstones, Maxwells and Kerrs, to name but a few, existed within a tribal, clannish society based around family loyalties rather than any real sense of nationhood (see MacDonald-Fraser 1971; Moffat 2008). As Scott observed, “it required many and strict regulations, on both sides, to prevent them from forming intermarriages, and from cultivating too close a degree of intimacy” (MSB 1802; 1: lxvii). Indeed, cross-Border marriages and alliances were common (see MacDonald Fraser 1971: 8). Reiving families came into frequent bloody conflict with rival clans at least as often as they did with those who sought to impose authority from the outside. At these times, the appropriation of ‘gear’ (mainly cattle, but frequently whatever the raiding party could get their hands on) was done by force.29

29 In the ballad “Dick of the Cow” (MSB 10), for example, the raiding party of Armstrongs breaks into Dick of the Cow’s house and make off with “three coverlets frae his wife’s bed” as well as his three cows (MSB 1802; 1: 140).
Disputes or long-running feuds stemming from such raids were avenged, but rarely settled, by the reciprocal spilling of blood. If the ruined keeps and peel towers dotting the landscape constituted the tangible heritage of the area, the ballads formed a layer of intangible lore which reflected the past. Where the story could be ‘upheld’ by its connection to a physical site, the memorial status attained a still deeper significance. Scott’s treatment of the ballads in the *Minstrelsy* appears to be aimed at both revitalising and recreating these memories. In certain cases, he fundamentally altered them and their surrounding lore, and reinforced his version of events in the minds of visitors who were drawn to see ‘Scott’s’ Borders.

**The Minstrelsy and Cultural Memory**

In the following chapters, the term ‘cultural memory’ is used as a metaphor for ways in which social groups fashion a collective identity through cultural practices which remember and represent the past. A quote from leading memory theorists Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney describes this process as one where communality is created by the use of symbolic artefacts in the sharing of memories:

> The very concept of cultural memory is itself premised on the idea that memory can only become collective as part of a continuous process whereby memories are shared with the help of symbolic artefacts that mediate between individuals, and, in the process, create communality across both space and time. (Erll and Rigney 2012: 2.)
Also used in the present thesis is the term ‘memory culture’, by which is meant the environment or environments in which the traditional narratives, songs, images and places drawn upon by Scott circulated. These entities may all be considered to function as “symbolic artefacts”, as in the quote above. That said, care needs to be taken over the use of the word artefact, which suggests a man-made entity: a ruined keep, a rusty sword or a neglected tombstone. As we shall see, certain memorial symbols described in the Minstrelsy are natural features such as rivers or hills, and some are less tangible, such as the singing of a ballad or landscape lore. Starting with the ballad, the form of which has been constantly in flux, the Minstrelsy may be visualised as a collective mediated text, or filter. To look behind the text on the page is to uncover webs of cultural meaning interwoven with, or indeed held together by, such symbols.

The development of cultural memory theory will be dealt with in more depth in Chapter Two. At this stage, however, it is deemed important to address concerns surrounding allegations of vagueness associated with the term ‘cultural memory’ in a study which makes frequent use of terms such as ‘tradition’, ‘oral narrative’ and ‘(folk)lore’. In answer to critics who maintain that the term is little more than a bad metaphor that blurs the boundaries distinguished by genre-defining terms such as ‘tradition’ and ‘myth’ (see Gedi & Elam, in Erll 2011: 98; Confino 1997), it might be suggested that the value of this concept lies in its integrative qualities. As Erll argues, “it is exactly the umbrella quality of the term ‘cultural memory’ which helps us see the […] relationships between phenomena which were formerly conceived of as distinct, and thus draw connections between tradition and canon, monuments
and historical consciousness, family communication and neuronal circuits.” (Erll 2011: 99.) From this perspective, the concept of cultural memory may be able to draw together seemingly disparate entities in the *Minstrelsy*, such as lore, history and myth.

**Chapter Outline**

Chapter One surveys the existing scholarship which has been carried out on the topic of Scott’s *Minstrelsy*, connecting these approaches, where appropriate, with more general trends in ballad and folklore studies. Reviewing the majority of scholarship which is concerned expressly with this collection reveals that such work generally tends to follow one of two approaches. While the first sets out to interrogate Scott’s treatment of his ballad material sources, the second is concerned with historicising the collection and its reflected ideologies through reference to the literary and political contexts of its creation. Historically, there has been a lack of dialogue between the literary study of ballads and simultaneous developments in the fields of ethnology and folklore. In the present thesis, it is argued that the study of cultural memory and the *Minstrelsy* may facilitate a more holistic approach which takes account of the complex literary, oral and memorial dynamics present in the ballad collection.

In Chapter Two, an overview of the development of the concept of ‘cultural memory’ will first be given, followed by a discussion of the intellectual debates concerning ‘history’ and ‘memory’ and the interaction between personal and collective recollection. The integrative nature of cultural memory studies is foregrounded, and it is argued that it is this aspect of the
concept which renders it particularly useful in approaching the background, creation and reception of Scott’s *Minstrelsy*.

Chapters Three to Seven bring Scott, memory and the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* together in different ways, all of which examine aspects of the interplay between personal, ancestral and cultural memories. Chapter Three explores Scott’s personal connections to ballads and folklore, and the familial networks of memory which imbued him with a sense of close proximity to Scotland’s past. Scott’s representations of his childhood in the *Memoir* of 1808 emphasise the influence that the Scotts of Sandyknowe had on him as a young boy. Members of Scott’s mother’s family, many of whom were evidently singers as well as storytellers, are also identified as important and relatively overlooked influences who played a vital role in initiating Scott’s visceral engagement with the past. Early letters to a childhood sweetheart also expand on his early enthusiasm for balladry and song.

Chapters Four and Five investigate the making of the *Minstrelsy* through the recollections of two of Scott’s close acquaintances, Robert Shortreed and William Laidlaw. Both Shortreed and Laidlaw recounted their memories in the latter part of their lives, around thirty years after the events described, and there is no evidence that either account was published during the men’s lifetimes. These sources shed light on the places to which Scott travelled and the cultural memories that he drew upon during the preparation of the *Minstrelsy*. Both autobiographical accounts provide examples of selective, episodic recollection, as both men relive the formative experiences of their younger days and preserve their memories of Scott for posterity.
Chapter Four is concerned with Shortreed’s memories of the expeditions he and Scott made in Liddesdale in the 1790s, which recall the places they visited, the characters they met and the influence these expeditions eventually exerted on the *Minstrelsy*. Shortreed’s account not only gives a bird’s eye view of the cultural *milieu* with which Scott grew acquainted, but also exemplifies certain processes of autobiographical recollection. Chapter Five examines William Laidlaw’s “Recollections of Walter Scott”, in which Laidlaw recalls the first few years of the two men’s friendship. Laidlaw’s memoir reflects the second period of the making of the *Minstrelsy*, which saw a shift in the collection’s focus on Liddesdale to the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys of Selkirkshire. While Shortreed remembered the years prior to the publication of the *Minstrelsy*, Laidlaw’s connection to Scott began soon after the appearance of the first edition. He was deeply involved in gathering ballad material for the second edition, and also played a key role in introducing Scott to James Hogg, whose contributions to the collection will also be investigated in this chapter. From the information given by Laidlaw, we can chart Scott’s accumulation of local knowledge and lore which he reinterpreted in the ballads and the editorial introductions.

Chapter Six considers Scott’s generation and recreation of places and sites of memory in the *Minstrelsy*. The first part of the chapter investigates Scott’s own local attachments, while the second part focuses on the representation of space and regionality in the *Minstrelsy* and the re-embodiment of memory in specific sites, a process Jan Assmann has termed “material contact between a
remembering mind and a reminding object” (J. Assmann, 2008: 111).30 The concept of a sense of place, termed by Scott “the peculiar charm of locality” (Scott to Anna Seward, 29 Jun 1802; SL 1: 146) will be considered in relation to the Minstrelsy ballads and commentary, particularly as regards the power of association. Finally, the concept of ‘a sense of place’ will be related to the work of Scott’s own network of correspondents, whose poems Scott added to the imitation section.

Continuing the discussion of memory spaces in the Minstrelsy, Chapter Seven discusses Scott’s influence on wider perceptions of the Borders as a land rich in history and myth. Amongst its readers, the Minstrelsy ballads frequently stirred memories of songs heard in infancy and even drew visitors to the area itself, a process of reinvestment and modification which Erll and Rigney have termed the “remediation” of cultural memory (Erll and Rigney 2012). This chapter uses a selection of recollections from Dorothy Wordsworth, Washington Irving, Henry Cockburn and Elizabeth Grant who all recounted the ways in which Scott’s mediation of Border memory affected their reactions to the landscape. In the examples discussed it is possible to see the “remediation” of such sites of memory in action, as visitors to the area fell under Scott’s spell as they viewed scenes “rendered classic by border tale and witching song” (Irving to Peter Irving, 1 Sep. 1817; in P. Irving 1883: 1, 184).

30 As the present study references the work of both Jan and Aleida Assmann, first-name initials will be used in order to distinguish between the two.
Chapter 1

Survey of Previous Scholarship

Minstrelsy Scholarship

This chapter discusses a number of issues which have previously characterised critical approaches to Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. In marked contrast to the voluminous body of literary and biographical work concentrating on Scott and his later works of poetry and fiction, his first major publishing venture has hitherto received comparatively little critical attention, even though the majority of scholars would agree with Grierson that “the real beginning, the tap-root of Scott’s later work as poet and novelist, is *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*” (Grierson 1938: 73). The tendency of many literary scholars to acknowledge the *Minstrelsy* as a transitive text and duly move on to the poetry or later novels was perceived and challenged by W. F. H. Nicolaisen, who protested “Scott the ballad collector, re-creator, editor, translator and imitator […] is not ‘serving time’ in the pursuit of preliterate or non-literate folk literature in oral tradition before graduating to the more sophisticated and intellectually more satisfying realms of written art literature” (Nicolaisen 1983: 169). Scott’s endeavour is worthy of assessment in its own right.

In reviewing previous critical approaches to the collection, a natural starting point is Thomas Finlayson Henderson’s edition of the *Minstrelsy*, first
published in 1902 (reprinted 1932). Apart from the posthumous edition edited by Scott’s son-in-law John Gibson Lockhart (1794-1854) and published in the 1833 edition of *The Poetical Works of Walter Scott*, Henderson has remained until now the only editor of Scott’s ballad collection and his edition has therefore been the main source for most critical discussions of the collection to date. In re-editing the *Minstrelsy*, Henderson’s aim was to carry out a “minute comparison of the ballad versions which passed through Scott’s hands, and a detailed examination of the illustrative notes” (Henderson 1932; 1: xv). He revised aspects of the contextual historical information, continuing in the tradition of the collection’s original editor. Henderson’s edition inevitably bears the marks of its time and itself contains various inaccuracies, particularly as regards the extent of Scott’s own hand in the creation of the *Minstrelsy* ballad versions. A strong focus is placed upon the *Minstrelsy* as a key stage of Scott’s literary development. Through an elucidation of “the exact character of Scott’s alterations and additions”, Henderson writes, it is hoped that the reader “may also obtain some insight into the character and growth of his poetic style” (Henderson 1932; 1: xxxiv). This edition may therefore be seen to reflect the contemporary preoccupation with textual forms rather than functions, and Henderson frequently appears to have been drawn into the quest for the perfect, unadulterated ballad form. In this vein, a distinction is made between “an unsophisticated ballad, [and] a ballad disfigured merely by the blundering amendments of generations of reciters” (Henderson 1932; 1: xxxi), a comment which echoes many of Scott’s own remarks on “corruptions introduced by reciters” (*MSB* 1802; 1: 185). Furthermore, Henderson denies “the very early
origin of any existing ballads”, and the “popular imagination” is rejected as “folk fancy, whatever that may mean” (Henderson 1932; 1: xxx).

Scott’s editing of the ballad material within the *Minstrelsy* came to dominate discussions of the collection in the early 20th century. Debate was provoked not only by Henderson (see Harry 1975: 4), but also by scholars such as William Fitzwilliam Elliot (1906, 1910) and Andrew Lang (1902, 1910) who exchanged strong views regarding issues such as the provenance of the ballad “Auld Maitland” (MSB 53), and the exact route taken by the protagonist in the ballad “Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead” (MSB 7). A factor crucial to understanding the context of such debates is the publication of Francis James Child’s seminal ballad collection, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (henceforth *ESPB*) which appeared in ten parts between 1882 and 1898. Child’s approach marked a watershed in comparative ballad scholarship due to its emphasis on sources and variants, and the *Minstrelsy* ballad versions fell under his scrutiny. In generating his assessment of the Scott ballad manuscripts, Child received invaluable help from his collaborator William Macmath (1844-1922). A legal clerk by trade, Macmath spent the whole of his annual leave for the year of 1890 at Abbotsford, where he transcribed ballad copies from the manuscript “Scotch Ballads, Materials for Border Minstrelsy”31 and sent them to Child for inclusion in part eight of *ESPB*. He also compared the *Minstrelsy* ballads with those in the Glenriddell manuscript, and his views on Scott’s editorial practices are made clear in this letter to Child:

31 This manuscript is now held in the National Library of Scotland, MS 877.
…for Scott’s fidelity I would not give twopence. From what I have seen in Glenriddell’s case (to which I will immediately advert) I know he made the most paltry alterations, “from tradition”, […] that he plundered one Ballad for the sake of another, that he failed in many cases to acknowledge his authority at all, and that, in short, he did almost everything which a Ballad Editor, as his duties are now understood, ought not to have done. (Letter from Macmath to Child, 9 Feb. 1890; in Montgomerie 1963: 94.)

The above quotation is drawn from the work of folklorist William Montgomerie, who shared Macmath’s distaste for Scott’s collation methods. Considering Scott’s editing of the *Minstrelsy*, Montgomerie makes a clear distinction between the two areas of literary and folklore studies: “[t]he literary critic will probably continue justifying Scott for ‘improving’ our traditional ballads and making poems out of them. The true balladist will agree with every word of Macmath’s criticism.” (Montgomerie 1963: 98.) Montgomerie’s scholarship in the mid-20th century corresponded to the rise of the study of folkloric context, as an increasing emphasis was placed on the bearers of oral tradition and the recognition of the importance of background, environment and functions within ballad singing.

While Montgomerie goes some way to engage with the ballad manuscripts used in compiling the *Minstrelsy*, Keith Harry’s unpublished PhD thesis, “The Sources and Treatment of Traditional Ballad Texts in Sir Walter Scott’s ‘Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border’ and Robert Jamieson’s ‘Popular Ballads and Songs’” (1975) represents a major attempt to carry out a comprehensive comparative textual analysis of the manuscript material connected to these two collections. Citing the need for a re-appraisal of Scott’s
treatment of his sources, Harry set out to challenge Henderson’s assertion that Scott inserted large amounts of text of his own composition into the ballads, an allegation which, Harry contends, was subsequently propagated by scholars of the text without reference to the original manuscript material (see Harry 1975: 6). Harry’s analysis concerns only the *Minstrelsy* ballads Child included in the *ESPB* (those not included by Child are omitted from his thesis) and his work focuses firmly on textual analysis rather than the wider cultural context of ballads and the more nuanced inner workings of the collection’s creation. Harry’s methods were paralleled most recently by Valentina Bold, who has carried out an analysis of James Hogg’s original submissions to the *Minstrelsy* and the treatment they were given in that collection (see Bold 2000: 116-141). Bold uses Hogg’s account of the caustic comments of Hogg’s mother Margaret Laidlaw (1730-1813) as a starting point, in which the latter apparently told Scott, in no uncertain terms, that his publishing of the ballads “spoilt them a’ thegither” (Hogg 2004 [1834]: 38). Assessing the extent to which Hogg was justified in resenting the changes inflicted upon his texts through Scott’s editing, Bold discovers a significant number of editorial alterations which Scott would have seen as minor literary amendments, rather than fresh creation.

Other scholars have focused on the contexts surrounding the creation of the collection rather than the textual analysis of the *Minstrelsy* ballads and their sources. “The Development of Scott’s ‘Minstrelsy’” (1940) is a useful source of information in which M. R. Dobie attempts to reconstruct the key events during the period of 1792-1802. Aided by Grierson’s centenary edition of Scott’s correspondence (1932) which had recently appeared at the time Dobie
was writing, Dobie draws on the recollections of Robert Shortreed and William Laidlaw as well as previously unexamined correspondence. Dobie’s work represents a step away from debates surrounding the authenticity of individual ballads, an approach which local historian Michael Robson would later expand upon in the article “Walter Scott’s Collecting of Ballads in the Borders” (1974). Robson builds upon Dobie’s article with a greater quantity of local historical research on Walter Scott’s contacts in Liddesdale and Selkirkshire which he drew upon in editing the *Minstrelsy*.

A more discursive approach to the collection has been taken by folklore scholar Charles Zug (1976; 1978), who has concentrated on Scott’s negotiation of oral tradition and history in the *Minstrelsy*. In “The Ballad and History: the Case for Scott” (1978), Zug identifies three components central to Scott’s editing, namely historiography, national bias and personal ancestry. He carries out a fine grain analysis of certain ballads, namely “The Outlaw Murray”, (MSB 1); “The Battle of Otterbourne” (MSB 2), “Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead” (MSB 7); “Kinmont Willie” (MSB 9); “The Laird o’ Logie” (MSB 19) and “Sir Patrick Spens” (MSB 55). Zug’s findings on Scott’s painstaking collation and interpolation methods agree, in the main, with those of Harry. His analysis of the sources of the ballad “Sir Patrick Spens” (MSB 55), for example, shows that Scott interpolated fifteen additional stanzas into Percy’s text of the ballad, ten from manuscript copies supplied by Leyden and Laidlaw, and five from the recitation of his friend Robert Hamilton.32 Summing up his

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findings, Zug concludes that “Scott’s *modus operandi* was to incorporate any new materials which he could sandwich into his principal copy and which were not actually invalidated by existing historical records.” (Zug 1978: 231-232.) Regarding the ballad’s historical background, Scott conceded that he had found “…no traces of the disaster in Scottish history, but, when we consider the meagre materials, whence Scottish history is drawn, this is no conclusive argument against the truth of the tradition.” (MSB 1803; 3: 62.) Providing comprehensive examples of Scott’s editing techniques and the motives behind such mediation, Zug’s work analyses the effect of such creative interpretation, highlighting the multi-layered nature of the concept of ‘tradition’ in the *Minstrelsy*.

Scott’s editorial negotiation of the different forms of media within the *Minstrelsy* has also been considered by Jane Millgate. In *Walter Scott: The Making of the Novelist* (1984), Millgate comments on the ease with which Scott’s editorial voice moves between history, antiquarianism and literature, and proposes that Scott’s literary career may be viewed as a gradual progression through various established forms, from amateur antiquarian, to editor, poet and finally author, “in the direction of that imaginative freedom he finally achieved in the world of his fiction” (Millgate 1984: 4). Millgate engages with the connections and disconnections between the ballad texts and the commentary, perceiving a disjunction which could be held to reflect the divided nature of late-18th century Scottish identity, but which is interwoven, and indeed united, by Scott’s deft handling of the collection’s competing modes of discourse. In drawing attention to the significance of the *Minstrelsy’s*
editorial commentary, which contains an emphasis on locality, regional identity and historical continuity, Millgate distinguishes between written history and oral tradition, two forms of media through which versions of the past are constructed:

In the *Minstrelsy* the two elements are thus held in the balance: the significance of the Scots material is enhanced, its value celebrated by the prose commentary, while the historical and scholarly impulses behind that commentary are directly connected to the living oral culture. Both forms of knowing and telling find expression as Scott moves with ease around the edges of his historical and ballad material, weaving the diverse strands together through renarration, illustration and explanation. (Millgate 1984: 10.)

Millgate’s point concerning editorial negotiation as an act of re-collection and re-imagination has also been taken up by Fiona Stafford in the recent work *Local Attachments* (2010) which broadens this area of enquiry through an investigation of the international appeal of the regional. Regarding Scott, Stafford uses Scott’s presentation of the *Minstrelsy* as a local work with a wide appeal as a study in the negotiation of insider and outsider perspectives. Scott’s ability to retain ancestral ties while maintaining a degree of objective detachment makes him, in Stafford’s view, “the perfect mediator between the community and the wider world, because he is able to share both perspectives and thus alleviate potential misunderstandings.” (Stafford 2010: 149.) Stafford’s thoughtful and detailed study takes a more nuanced approach to what might be termed ‘Scott-land’ scholarship which has enjoyed a great deal
of popularity in recent years and explores Scott’s re-imagining and transformation of Scottish national identity more generally.\textsuperscript{33}

In the field of literary history, critics such as Susan Stewart, Penny Fielding and Richard Cronin have investigated the oral and literary dynamics at play within the discourses of 18th and 19th century antiquarianism and Scottish Romanticism with particular reference to ballad collecting and publishing. In the article “Scandals of the Ballad” (1990), later augmented by the book \textit{Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation} (1991), Stewart examines the ways in which literary interpretations of orality came to serve certain ideological functions during the 18th and 19th centuries. The ‘scandals’ and ‘crimes’ to which Stewart refers in the title surround this concept of authenticity, with particular reference to the genres Stewart deems “distressed” (Stewart 1990: 67-69): the ballad, the epic, the proverb and the fable. In particular, Stewart’s work is concerned with the collection, forgery and publication of ballad material, the ensuing effects on concepts of ‘authenticity’ and its accompanying tropes of loss, rescue and recovery:

...the notion that writing endows the oral with materiality is another facet of the collector's interest in establishing the ephemerality of the oral, an interest that puts the oral in urgent need of rescue. In other words, the writing of oral genres always results in a residue of lost context and lost presence that literary culture imbues with a sense of nostalgia and even regret. (Stewart 1990: 135.)

The ‘artefactualisation’ of the ballad form, Stewart suggests, is born out of a consciousness of literary mediation and intervention: “the external history of

\textsuperscript{33}See for example Kelly 2011; McAlpine-Cunningham 1996; Rigney 2012.
the ballad is thus inextricably bound up with the emerging notion of the ballad as artefact and the crisis in authenticity that results from the severing of this artefact from its performance context” (Stewart 1990: 136). The preoccupation with ‘authenticity’ in the late 18th and early 19th centuries may be seen to have emerged as the result of the increasingly ubiquitous printing press and a growing enthusiasm for antiquarianism. The resultant clashes arise from an increasing concern with conceptual ideologies surrounding the past represented in the ballads and their physical embodiment in printed texts. Stewart’s work offers a fresh way to consider Romantic renderings of orality and is relentless in its scrutiny of authenticity as a concept subject to historical reinterpretation, rather than one which exists organically in the ballad for the scholar to exhume. This is an instructive way to consider Minstrelsy ballads, which frequently represent a convoluted intermingling of literary and oral sources.

Filtered through a literary discourse, the Minstrelsy presents complex and often contradictory attitudes towards orality. While Scott drew his material from both written and oral sources, he tended to be more meticulous in detailing his manuscript sources than those drawn from the living traditions held in the memories of local ballad singers. Penny Fielding has addressed this issue in the context of the Minstrelsy, making specific reference to the collection’s containment of orality within the authoritative bounds of writing in response to “anxieties about the social status of orality” (Fielding 1996: 52). Focusing upon Scott’s editorial notes, Fielding maintains that Scott favoured written accounts over oral tradition, and relates this to wider issues of Scottish national identity during the 18th and 19th centuries. In particular, she suggests
that the political union of Scotland and England preceded “a bifurcation of orality into an acclaimed ideal and a disparaged social condition” (Fielding 1996: 22) and coins the term “the paradox of orality” for the contradictions which extend to ideologies of origin and transmission of the ballad materials. This paradox “guarantees both the purity of origins and the impurity of transmission” (Fielding 1996: 53), and is illustrated by the complex literary dynamics which exist between the *Minstrelsy* ballads and their editorial commentary.

The social and political context of the collection’s creation, and its role in the history of the literary marketplace has interested scholars such as Richard Cronin (1999), who has argued that the publication of the *Minstrelsy* changed the way in which ballads were valued and consumed in the early 19th century. Cronin’s observations are geared towards explaining the crucial importance of the *Minstrelsy* to Scott’s later career as poet and author. He maintains that Scott’s ballad collection both artistically and practically prepared the market for the later poems and novels by sparking creative public interest in modern renderings of history. Having obtained the necessary experience of successful publishing and marketing, Cronin suggests, Scott sowed the seeds for the success of the subsequent poems and the historical novels which would later be published anonymously. Furthermore, Cronin sees the political turmoil in France as a crucial factor in understanding the context in which the *Minstrelsy* was prepared. Like John Sutherland, one of the most recent biographers of Scott, Cronin sees the mood of the period reflected in Scott’s military fervour (see Sutherland 1995: 87). Oliver (2008), takes this
argument still further, suggesting that the *Minstrelsy*’s structural form encapsulates a direct response to the revolutionary ferment in France. Oliver suggests that by placing the subversive romantic ballad section between the Historical and Imitation categories, Scott ensured that his Border rogues and rebels were portrayed as noble yet loyal savages rather than revolutionary, anti-royalist radicals, and neutralised the association of the romantic ballads with “passion, moral laxity and superstition” (Oliver 2008:18).

By concentrating purely on the uses of orality, literary approaches may risk bypassing the dynamics of oral tradition itself. In fact, this focus on what we might term the ‘uses and abuses’ of traditional forms within the literary marketplace can lead to a tendency to treat the actual ballad material within the *Minstrelsy* as a mere commodity, cast adrift in the wider sphere of social import and context. This is not to suggest that entirely unmediated forms of orality exist in a literate society, but rather that literary approaches should not blind us to the very real phenomenon of oral transmission of traditional material and the contexts in which such transmission took place.

**Ballads and the Oral Tradition**

As Suzanne Gilbert has pointed out with reference to James Hogg, an over-emphasis on the literary shaping of orality can reduce the oral tradition itself to a token role: “[m]uch analysis of labouring-class writers’ relationships to tradition tends to accept literary premises set out by 18th century antiquaries and by literary scholars, without adequate reference to the markedly different
understanding of tradition among those closest to it” (Gilbert 2006: 1). During the period we are concerned with in the 18th and early 19th centuries, the existence of a vigorous oral culture running alongside and mingling with a literary one is undeniable. However, oral culture was not confined to the “labouring-classes”, as Gilbert terms them above, but extended throughout literate strands of society, from the emergent middle class upwards. Such coexistence is plain in the repertoire of a well-educated ballad singer such as Anna Gordon, Mrs Brown of Falkland, who, as Rieuwerts has observed, was “deeply steeped in the Scottish ballad tradition, written and oral” (Rieuwerts 2011: 61). She learned ballads from an aunt (a Mrs Farquharson), her mother, Lillias Forbes, and her nursemaid (see Bronson 1969: 65; Rieuwerts 2011: 20). The Brown ballads formed an integral part of the romantic ballad section in the Minstrelsy. As Chapter Three of the present study will show, the memory culture Scott himself recounts being surrounded by during his youth consisted of oral and literary influences in more or less equal measure.

Like Fielding, Gilbert sees Scott favouring written history over oral accounts, and refers to the “paratextual apparatus” of the Minstrelsy’s editorial commentary as a device which placed Scott as editor “outside the tradition, as an observer examining the evidence.” (Gilbert 2006: 8.) While Hogg had a direct link to Border lore, Gilbert maintains, Scott’s association was antiquarian and literary. There is no denying that issues of class come into play in this case. The background of the two men differed in almost every way, and while Hogg himself propounded these differences in his literary persona, Gilbert’s simple polarisation oversimplifies the cases both of the Minstrelsy’s
sources and commentary, as well as Scott’s own complex relationship to oral
tradition and literature, which will be considered in Chapter Three.

It is clear, then, that previous critical approaches to this collection
demonstrate a wider history of tension between literary text-centred approaches
and the emphasis on cultural context demanded by the fields of folklore and
ethnological studies. While even the word ‘context’ should be treated with care
lest it implies an overly ‘textual’ approach, the German term *Sitz im Leben*
perhaps more appropriately refers to the ‘life setting’ of such cultural forms
such as ballad singing. Emily Lyle is one ballad scholar who has emphasised
the importance of the performative aspect of the ballads’ life away from the
printed page. Discussing the ballads’ characteristic of “otherness”, Lyle notes
that

…we should never forget that the ballad is a sung genre, with a whole
musical dimension that is not caught by the printed text […] [w]hatever
efforts we make, however, we can never recapture contemporary
singings of ballad versions from earlier centuries and it is useful, in
thinking about this, to separate out the ideas of text and context. (Lyle
1994: 12.)

Ballad scholars have typically struggled with the fact that, prior to the
folk revival of the 1950s-60s, the cultural contexts in which the ballads were
sung are normally temporally out of reach. However, the focus of the present
study is upon tradition and collectivity rather than the repertoire of individual
singers.34 It is therefore not deemed necessary in this instance to venture into a

34 Some examples of studies of this nature include Rieuwerts (2011); Lyle, McAlpine and
lengthy discussion of scholarship influenced by Milman Parry and Albert Lord’s theory of oral-formulaic composition, the theory that singers and reciters reconstruct their material afresh with each performance, drawing on set formulae. Nevertheless, the contextual aspect of such an undertaking looms large in the case of the creation of this canonical collection of songs, as does the issue of temporal and cultural distance. On this subject, Rieuwerts identifies what she has termed the ‘communicative fallacy’: “the naïve notion that we only have to reconstruct the performance situation of a ballad in order to understand its meaning and function” (Rieuwerts 2001-2: 250). To place ourselves in the singers’ shoes, to see the world through their eyes and therefore arrive at the ‘meaning’ of the ballad they sing is impossible. Drawing on the work of German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, Rieuwerts advocates instead an “effective historical consciousness”, which may be achieved through a sensitive understanding of our past together with our own limitations. Such an understanding enables an accommodation of the distance between present and past which does not seek to overcome the distance, but rather, in allowing the otherness of the past to co-exist with our modern viewpoint, can bring about what Rieuwerts has termed the “fusing of horizons” which constantly occurs in the tradition itself (Rieuwerts 2001-2: 250-251).

The distinction between text and performance has been scrutinised by Baumann and Briggs (1990), who give a comprehensive outline of the developments in the area of ethnopoetics and performance in the field of

35 Buchan’s *The Ballad and the Folk* (1997), for example, was a seminal analysis of the repertoire and historical context of the 18th-century ballad singer Anna Gordon, Mrs Brown of Falkland (above), in which Buchan examined underlying structural patterns and their role in the formation of and recall within a ballad repertoire. See also Foley 1991.
ethnographic study. They argue for the necessity of studying the textual details that impart insights into the ways in which the performance participants collectively construct or frame their art: “in order to avoid reifying ‘the context’ it is necessary to study the textual details that illuminate the manner in which participants are collectively constructing the world around them” (Baumann and Briggs 1990: 69).

The present study maintains that contextual studies can have useful and significant implications when the focus is upon an editor and a ballad collection rather than a specific singer’s repertoire. While a collector’s editing methods are often pigeon-holed by an acknowledgement that he or she was ‘of their time’, this implicitly suggests an understanding of what exactly constituted ‘their time’ versus ‘our time’ which is problematic. The process of meaning-making and the assignation of value is artificially concentrated in a collection such as the *Minstrelsy*, where an editor decides what does and does not get fixed in print. Meaning is mediated and renewed through the physical and mental collation and reconstruction of multiple ballad texts, in a deliberate and frequently self-conscious aping of the traditional process. Theories of cultural remembering provide a perspective from which to assess a collection in which the multiple meanings, values and world views of many are passed through the relatively narrow filter of a very few.

**Conclusions**
Over the years, critical attention devoted to the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* has explored the ballad collection from a variety of perspectives. Although there has been little in the way of a streamlined path of development, more recent scholarship is generally reflective of a shift from the former approach, which was concerned with authenticating or disproving the provenance of the *Minstrelsy* ballads and which dominated in the early 20th century, to an emphasis on historical and literary context and import of the collection. These differing approaches, which might be held to represent the tensions between text and context, are long-standing in folklore and ballad studies. As I have demonstrated above, questions surrounding the ‘authenticity’ of the *Minstrelsy* ballad texts have loomed large in such considerations, and it is true that we are dealing with a highly mediated text whose title nevertheless proclaims itself to consist of ballads “collected in the Southern counties of Scotland.” However, as has been outlined, reifying the concept of authenticity can lead to self-defeating scholarship which becomes bound up with the very issues it set out to expose. In the literary realm, modern scholarship has seen the *Minstrelsy* as exemplifying Romantic representations of orality, mediated and contained within a safely literate framework tempered by nationalist and political ideologies. Such literary perspectives certainly aid a balanced view of this collection, but can neglect the equally important contexts of the ballads themselves. The sphere of ballad studies, however, which one would expect to address this issue, has so far displayed a marked lack of sustained interest in the complex and often contradictory voices at work in the *Minstrelsy*. This is due in part to Scott’s connection to the literary sphere and the ensuing interest
shown by literary, rather than folklore scholars, in his ballad collection. There are undeniably methodological difficulties surrounding Scott’s editing of the material, as his inconsistent acknowledgement of sources can obscure the workings of oral tradition behind the ballads as presented on the page.

While the presentation within the Minstrelsy of a distinctly regional, historical tradition was instrumental in inspiring new imaginings of ballad singing and the place of tradition on both regional and national levels, it is proposed that focusing on the representations and functions of memory in this collection offers a fresh approach which allows a modern holistic assessment of the Minstrelsy and the memory cultures from which it was fashioned. In this way a degree of the unknown in the mediation of the past is accommodated, and this approach provides a broad base from which to investigate the context, the immediate reception and the ensuing alterations of the Minstrelsy ballads and their framing texts.
Chapter 2

Memory Theory

Cultural Memory Studies

Bringing cultural memory to bear on the Minstrelsy throws light on what Constantine has termed “the complicated circular process by which a song becomes both the subject and object of a recreated past” (Constantine 1996: 24). As outlined in the introduction, ‘cultural memory’ is a metaphorical term, a signifier for the ways in which groups determine their collective identities through cultural and political commemoration of a collective past. Catherine Jones has described this dimension of cultural memory as “folk memory […] a phenomenon of the present as of the past, embodied in the living community and behind the creation of social identities” (Jones 2003: 32). Oral tradition, which plays out in the interaction and integration of personal and collective memory, has an immensely important role to play in these processes, as retention in the human brain is a prerequisite for performance in the collective sphere. As David Atkinson has summarised, “memorisation is the most important element in the transmission of the Child ballads.” (Atkinson, in Constantine and Porter 2003: 125.)

Cultural acts of recollection and their roles in fashioning collective and cultural identities have been the subject of critical enquiries within a wide range of disciplines over the past twenty years. The exponential increase in
interest in the subject has led to the war historian Jay Winter terming this phenomenon a “memory boom” (Winter 2006: 2). Erll has outlined the challenge constituted by any attempt to provide an overview of a topic which is “not only a multidisciplinary field, but fundamentally an interdisciplinary project” (Erll 2011: 38). An inevitably selective and abridged overview of the distinct (yet frequently overlapping) fields of memory studies will be attempted as follows.

The recent upsurge in interest in memory notwithstanding, the concept of collective memory has circulated within various discourses for some time. From the different types of history considered by G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) who distinguished ‘original’, ‘reflective’ and ‘philosophical’ history, to Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) who considered antiquarian, monumental and critical uses of the past, the mediation of recollection is a subject of which philosophers and historians have long been aware. Nowadays the term ‘collective memory’ is most often connected to the concept developed by French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945), a student of the sociologist and philosopher Émile Durkheim (1858-1917). The main thesis of Halbwachs’ book La Mémoire Collective (1950, translated 1992) is the rejection of a separation between individual and collective memory. Halbwachs insisted that “[m]emory is a collective function” (Halbwachs 1992: 183); in other words, all individual memory is socially constructed by collective memory, and is consequently unsustainable outside its context of social networks. Group memory is therefore limited in space and time, and preoccupied with events that are within living memory. By contrast, the
concept of ‘history’ surfaces when past events are “no longer included within the sphere of thought of existing groups” (Halbwachs 1992 [1925]: 106) but are maintained in the academic sphere. As discussed below, the absolute distinction Halbwachs made between history and memory is one which proved particularly provocative for subsequent scholars, and although this notion has enjoyed a degree of popularity within the work of scholars such as Pierre Nora (below), most scholars would now see ‘history’ and ‘memory’ not as polarised opposites or equals, but as “two complementary modes of cultural memory” (A. Assmann 2011: 123).

Memory is frequently called upon by cultural historians today to provide an ‘alternative’ method of accessing the past, challenging ideas and concepts pre-conceived by a more conventional historiography. Metaphorical ‘collective memory’ remains intrinsically linked to the politics of identity, and under the umbrella term ‘oral history’ there tends to be a natural emphasis on minorities, counter-memory, and narratives which have been officially ‘forgotten’. Memory studies in Britain have often been closely connected to socialist critiques of oral history (see for example Tonkin 1995; Samuel and Thompson 1990), while in the wider context of western culture such narratives often address the topic of trauma, analysing the ways in which initial recollections become rehearsed over the course of subsequent generations (see Leggiewie, in Meusburger, Heffernan & Wunder 2011; Hirsch 2008). Memory itself has been seen as having reached a point of ‘crisis’ due to the technological innovations of modern society and the resulting psychological shifts (for example Neal 1998; Huyssen 1995; Terdiman 1993).
A second strand of modern memory studies is concerned with the creation, mediation and perpetuation of memory ‘sites’. Pierre Nora’s concept of lieux de mémoire (‘sites’ or ‘realms’ of memory) has been particularly influential in this regard. Lieux de mémoire, where “memory crystallizes and secretes itself” (Nora 1989: 7) do not have to be topographical or even tangible in nature, but must have a material, functional and symbolic dimension through which they are held to embody French national memory and consequently affirm a collective national identity. They are distinguished from mere cultural objects by their “symbolic aura” and must be maintained by a collective “will to remember” (Nora 1989: 18-19). Nora’s concept hinges on the historicisation of memory and recollection in post-revolutionary France, a shift characterised by rupture and dislocation. He contends that the need for such sites has developed due to the erosion of milieux de mémoire, or ‘real environments’ of memory in which the memory of the past was embodied by traditional practices and ancestral rites. Loss and decay are therefore integral to the concept of lieux de mémoire, and for Nora, even the need for the term ‘memory’ is indicative of an absence:

If we were able to live within memory, we would not have needed to consecrate lieux de mémoire in its name. Each gesture, down to the most everyday, would be experienced as the ritual repetition of a timeless practice in a primordial identification of act and meaning. (Nora 1989: 8.)

While Nora portrays memory as “life, borne by living societies founded in its name”, history, by contrast, is “the reconstruction, always problematic, of what
is no longer” (Nora 1989: 8). As noted above, the diametric opposition of history and memory inherent in the concept is one of the most challenging elements of the theory. The formation of sites of memory results from a modern obsession with ‘history’ which has broken with the past, eradicating ‘true’ memory. With the sense of loss of “milieux de mémoire, real environments of memory” (Nora 1989: 7) there arises a need for a historically generated memory to be reproduced. Nora correlates these ‘real environments of memory’ with a vanishing peasant culture, in a manner which has evident parallels with the well-rehearsed antiquarian tropes of loss and decay which framed Scott’s own endeavour. While Nora’s interest lies in charting lieux de mémoire rather than questing after the ‘lost’ form, his concept appears to be characterised by a lingering nostalgia:

The remnants of experience still lived in the warmth of tradition, in the silence of custom, in the repetition of the ancestral, have been displaced under the pressure of a fundamentally historical sensibility. Self-consciousness emerges under the sign of that which has already happened, as the fulfilment of something always already begun. We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left. (Nora 1989: 7.)

The influence of Nora’s concept has extended far and wide, and has often been taken up in a literal sense. Winter, for example, has carried out two in-depth examinations of personal memory and cultural commemoration surrounding the First World War (see Winter 1995; 2006), while monuments and monumentalisation have constituted a major area of research within
emerging disciplines such as museum studies (see for example Dickinson, Blair & Ott 2010; Crane 2000; Kavanagh 2000).

Other recent studies have looked at less tangible aspects of the theory, for example Udo J. Hebel’s body of work on American literary memories (see Hebel 2008; 2009). Defining work in this area has been carried out by Jan and Aleida Assmann in the fields of history, art and religion. Recent contributions and refinements of the Assmanns’ work have been offered by the work of Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney concerning cultural memory, literature and the cultural “afterlives” of literary texts.

Fundamental to the early work carried out by the Assmanns was the definition of the term ‘Cultural Memory’ as a distinct subset of collective memory. In the article “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity” (1988, translated 1995) Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka augmented the concepts of Halbwachs’ collective memory, by dividing collective memory into two frames: ‘communicative’ and ‘cultural’ memory. ‘Communicative’ memory is vernacular, ‘lived’ memory, “based exclusively on everyday (oral) communications” (J. Assmann & Czaplicka 1995: 126). It exists within the bounds of actual human memory and possesses a “limited temporal horizon” of around eighty to one hundred years which shifts with the passing of time (see J. Assmann & Czaplicka 1995: 127). By contrast, ‘cultural’ memory is detached from the everyday. It is deliberately established, stabilised memory, and is formed when communicative memory is transferred into the realm of objectivised culture (see J. Assmann & Czaplicka 1995: 128). Unlike communicative memory, the horizon of cultural memory is fixed and stabilised
by the connection of image, term or narrative, creating what Assmann terms “figures of memory” (J. Assmann & Czaplicka 1995: 129). Remembrance of such ‘figures’ are perpetuated by cultural forms of recollection such as texts, rites, and monuments, and institutional communications such as recitation, practice and observance: “the concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose ‘cultivation’ serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image” (J. Assmann & Czaplicka 1995: 132). This concept of ‘figures of memory’ is particularly pertinent to our study of ballads and memory, being concerned with the cultural meaning invested in symbols, objects, narratives, landscape and images.

Building upon Jan Assmann’s concept of ‘figures of memory’, and the constantly shifting mediascapes in which recollections are transmitted, shaped and maintained, a particularly important aspect of Aleida Assmann’s work has been concerned with the complementary interactions of canon and archive, or the dynamics of ‘functional’ and ‘storage’ memory in the formation of cultural identity. While ‘functional memory’ circulates in public consciousness, ‘storage’ memory has, temporarily or otherwise, lost its context. Assmann refers to the latter as “the memory of past memories” (A. Assmann 2011: 124); it is the material drawn upon by historical scholarship which must be archived until selected, rediscovered, reinvigorated and canonised. Storage memory is therefore a corpus far larger than functional memory, although it informs the latter through a process of selection. It has a latent power in its capacity to be
reconstructed, influencing and informing that which is circulating in public consciousness:

Whereas tradition (or texts) refers to the conscious, deliberate articulations that construct meaning and convey messages across time, the remnants (or traces) correspond to contingent fragments and relics that have fallen out of their contexts and carry no inscribed meaning of their own. Whereas the traditions have to be read within historical cultural frames, the remnants are opaque, indeterminate signs that must be deciphered within a framework that is to be created by the respective historian. (A. Assmann, 2011: 131.)

With its internal mediation between historical accounts and acknowledged sources, the dynamics of functional and storage memory are clearly to be seen within the interplay of remembering and forgetting in the Minstrelsy. Portrayed as teetering on the edge of memory, at the outermost reaches of the recollections of the previous generation, or in a manuscript which has long lain undisturbed, a ballad fragment can be misremembered and changed. As Scott would have it, a remnant which has “become inexplicable [...] through corruptions introduced by reciters” (MSB 1802; 1: 185), in other words, rendered “corrupt” by the oral tradition that preserved it, might still remain “a precious relic of old times, that bears the national character stamped upon it – like a cameo that shows what the national visage was in former days”, as Scott reportedly told Washington Irving (Irving 1835: 28). In the 1830 essay “Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry”, Scott describes the role of editorial intervention in the ‘recollection’ of misremembered artefacts:
The minstrel who endeavoured to recite with fidelity the words of the author, might indeed fall into errors of sound and sense, and substitute corruptions for words he did not understand. But the ingenuity of a skilful critic could often, in that case, revive and restore the original meaning; while the corrupted words became, in such cases, a warrant for the authenticity of the whole poem. (MSB 1830; 1: 21.)

In their fragmented, ‘corrupt’ state, the Minstrelsy ballads are presented as the embodiment of memory traces, an approach which Constantine and Porter have identified as characteristic of editors of traditional material across the ages: “presumption of loss and decay has dominated critical approaches to song texts” (Constantine and Porter 2003: 4). Scott’s selective use and interpretation of his sources is part and parcel of the editorial process of dynamic recollection: the functional and storage memory is in a state of flux, with new meanings and interpretations being placed upon sites of memory.

The literary scholar Ann Rigney is also interested in the dynamic interaction of functional and storage memory. In her body of work she has taken issue with the essential nostalgia which underpins Nora’s approach, suggesting that it and other such studies are essentially based upon what she terms the “original plenitude and subsequent loss” model (Rigney 2005: 12). According to this model, memory is conceived as an entity that was initially ‘whole’ and ‘complete’ but is subject to gradual disintegration over the passing of time, and requires acts of preservation to keep it alive and as close to the ‘original’ form as possible. Rigney’s approach therefore develops Nora’s concept, in that it steers away from the perception of ‘sites of memory’ as unnatural or artificial and instead places an emphasis on the constantly shifting dynamic of memory creation, maintenance and recreation. From this
perspective, Rigney maintains, sites of memory provide “common frameworks for appropriating the past” (Rigney 2005: 18), and are created through the convergence of medial representation. They are therefore reminiscent of the palimpsest in that they consist of multiple “memorial layers” (Rigney 2005: 19). The essentially dynamic nature of recollection is a useful guiding principle in the investigation of the *Minstrelsy* as one such site of cultural memory which encompasses many memorial layers. The ‘plenitude and loss’ model, above, may be seen to echo Scott’s endeavours to preserve such ‘endangered’ figures of cultural memory in the form of the ballads. The dynamic role of this collective text in representing and recreating a distinctive collective identity of the Borders bears testament to Rigney’s statement that “memories of a shared past are collectively constructed and reconstructed in the present rather than resurrected from the past” (Rigney 2005: 14). The *Minstrelsy* can therefore offer a bird’s eye view on these processes of construction and reconstruction through which collections engage with and reinterpret existing memory cultures.

In considering the *Minstrelsy* as a medium of cultural memory, it is important to recognise two ‘memorial’ aspects which intersect within the *Minstrelsy*. These are the ballads themselves, and the contextualising lore that surrounds them. Both are maintained through the interaction of personal and collective memory, and both are multiform entities which have, over time, made significant contributions to the way in which singers and their audiences remember and maintain an understanding of their pasts.
Personal Memory and Autobiographical Recollection

An understanding of Scott’s family memories, linked to his own individual memory and identity, inform the context of the *Minstrelsy*’s creation. However, Scott also drew on a wide network of contributors whose memories manifest themselves in the *Minstrelsy* in ways that have frequently gone unacknowledged. The recollections in question frequently represent collective familial and regional identities which enhance our understanding of the representation of cultural memory reflected in the *Minstrelsy*. The present study initially examines the recollections of Scott himself, before examining other memoirs which impart a sense of the social networks and cultural memory of the areas that Scott both travelled to, and guided visitors within, before and after the creation of the *Minstrelsy*. The temporal distance of these recollections from the events they recount adds a further layer to these memorial dynamics. Other examples drawn from the recollections of Henry Cockburn, Washington Irving and Dorothy Wordsworth may be expressly connected to the memory of place, another key component of cultural memory. These recollections recount Scott himself guiding visitors in the area and allow a limited assessment of the influence that his representation and contextualisation of the ballads had on perceptions of the landscape itself.

Williams and Conway have described autobiographical memories as “the content of the self” (Williams and Conway 2009: 33) and have emphasised the importance of these narratives in defining an individual’s sense of self through a reflexive process that looks outwards as well as inwards.
Current memory research defines two distinct types of memory at work during the process of autobiographical recollection: ‘episodic memory’, which recalls specific events with particular clarity, and ‘autobiographical knowledge’, a set of facts through which the individual repeatedly constructs a sense of self. Autobiographical recollection is constructed during the dynamic act of remembering which brings episodic memory and autobiographical knowledge together to form an over-arching narrative. Such narratives orientate and locate individual identity in a collective network of remembrance. These acts of self-definition in personal memory may be linked, metaphorically, to the formation of collective cultural narratives within a societal group, where, as Aleida Assmann suggests, the process of narrativisation similarly rests on the “process of selection, connection, and the creation of meaning” (A. Assmann, in Erll 2011: 147).

Conclusions

Considerations of autobiographical memory alongside collective memory, and the interactions of the two, form the backbone for the present investigation alongside the ballad collection itself. The essential interaction between individual, personal memory and the collective cultural memory of social groups is brought to the fore by Erll, who has maintained that “it is only through the interaction of cognitive and social memory that memory culture emerges.” (Erll 2011: 98.) This symbiotic aspect of cultural memory, whereby personal memories are simultaneously created and shaped by a societally
conditioned symbolic order, is a concept at the heart of the *Minstrelsy*, and the parallels with the oral tradition itself are apparent.
Chapter 3

“Family Legends”: Scott and Generational Memory

Introduction

This chapter explores aspects of generational memory communicated to Scott through what he himself termed “a considerable collection of family legends” (Scott 2000 [1827]; 1: 5). Family lore formed an immensely influential part of Scott’s childhood development, and fed into his wider appreciation of selective, recollected narratives concerning the storied, localised past emphasised in the *Minstrelsy*. Catherine Jones has seen this aspect of Scott’s upbringing as crucial in forming an interlinked personal and cultural identity, suggesting that “[a]s a child Scott passively absorbed folk memory, and his sense of self is thus connected to collective experience” (Jones 2003: 32). In seeking to address the forms of memory from which the *Minstrelsy* was drawn, this interplay between personal and collective experience will first be explored by examining Scott’s representation of his early years in the *Memoir* he began in 1808. Here Scott recollects family traditions and his own childhood memories while also reflecting on the nature of his own memory and the fusion of oral and literary stimuli which formed his education and imaginative development. From this source and other collected evidence, certain key figures from Scott’s family who appear to have had a particular influence on his perception of the past will be identified. Finally, Scott’s early enthusiasm
for ballads and the history of the Border region will be examined through examples of early letters to his teenage sweetheart “Jessie”.

The Memoir and the Scotts of Sandyknowe

Scott began the work of committing memories of his early years to paper in April 1808. He resumed writing in 1810 or 1811, revising the section on his childhood stay in Bath, and, probably with thoughts of his own mortality pressing upon him more strongly, returned to the manuscript once more in 1826 (see Hewitt 1981: xxiv-xxv). Lockhart refers to the work as “the Ashiestiel Memoir”, named after the house Scott leased between 1804 and 1811 where the bulk of his Memoir was written.

Lockhart published Scott’s Memoir in the first chapter of Volume One of the Life of Sir Walter Scott (1837), under the title Memoir of the Early Life of Sir Walter Scott, written by himself. Editing Scott’s autobiography, Lockhart collated the alterations and added his own editorial notes. Although Scott’s amendments of 1810, 1811 and 1826 are not the focus of the discussion in this case, the progressive editing of Scott’s own life story is, like his editing of the Minstrelsy, another example of the dynamic approach typical of the on-going reinterpretation of such memorial acts.

36 All references to Scott’s Memoir are taken from Scott on Himself (Hewitt, 1981). David Hewitt’s editing has taken account of the work’s different creation periods. The original manuscript is held in the NLS, MS Acc 4991.

37 Ashiestiel stands on the south bank of the Tweed, about six miles south-west of Galashiels. It was Scott’s spring and summer residence between 1804 and 1811. The property had formerly belonged to Scott’s uncle, William Russell; Scott leased the property from Russell’s son James, who lived in Madras.
One of three memory processes identified by psychologists, autobiographical remembering, as distinct from semantic and episodic memory, is fashioned through a process which condenses disparate memories of the past into a cohesive narrative (see Erll 2011: 106). Like its metaphorical counterpart collective memory, autobiographical memory is highly constructive and dynamic in nature and has a strong role in identity formation. Discussing ‘life-writing’, Saunders states that “… rather than give us direct access to unmediated memory, what such texts reveal is, instead, memory cultures” (Saunders 2008: 323). In this instance, these “memory cultures” reveal much about the way in which Scott represented his own past and that of his forebears. As well as constituting a source in its own right, Scott’s Memoir may also permit a keyhole view of the wider representation of a regional and national collective cultural memory in the Minstrelsy.

A defining incident in Scott’s early childhood was the debilitating illness he contracted in 1773 at around eighteen months of age. This was probably one of the earliest recorded cases of poliomyelitis (see Cone 1973: 35). On the recommendation of his maternal grandfather Dr John Rutherford, Scott was sent from his parents’ house in College Wynd, Edinburgh, to stay with his paternal grandparents, Robert and Barbara Scott at Sandyknowe Farm by Kelso. He stayed mainly at Sandyknowe until he was about seven years old, when he returned to Edinburgh and was plunged back into the daily life of a bustling young family, having to take his place amongst six brothers and sisters. As might well be imagined, certain elements of his new situation in Edinburgh came as an unpleasant shock compared to the attention he had
received at Sandyknowe as an only child, and Scott recollected “I felt the change from being a single indulged brat to becoming a member of a large family very severely” (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 19).

Biographers of Scott have identified the years he spent at Sandyknowe as instrumental in helping to form part of his cultural identity as well as enriching his imaginative resources. As this chapter will also show, lore passed on to Scott by his mother’s family in Edinburgh was also of particular significance in shaping the childhood memories from which he drew as an adult. John Buchan’s evaluation of Scott’s time at Sandyknowe in the company of his grandparents’ generation can, therefore, be extended to encompass both sides of his family, from whom he gained an insight – the unconscious but penetrating insight of a child – into a society which was fast disappearing, the society from which the ballads had sprung. A whole lost world had been reborn in his brain, and the learning of after years was only to supplement the far more potent imaginative construct of childhood. (Buchan 1946: 33.)

The Memoir reflects Scott’s own interpretation of the burgeoning Romantic interest in childhood as the source of creativity. From child of the heather at Sandyknowe Farm to schoolboy in Edinburgh, the self portrait which Scott paints in the Memoir fuses the influence of wild nature with the urban education afforded him by Scotland’s newly enlightened capital.

The opening sentences introducing Scott’s description of his youth, his family background, schooling and academic development are characteristically self-effacing in tone, but are clearly concerned with the writer’s memorial
legacy. Scott evidently felt it necessary to justify his autobiographical endeavour:

I may be therefore permitted, without an extraordinary degree of vanity, to take the precaution of recording a few leading circumstances (they do not merit the name of events) of a very quiet and uniform life – that, should my literary reputation survive my temporal existence, the public may know from good authority all that they are entitled to know of an individual who has contributed to their amusement. (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 1.)

Having introduced and defended his own reasons for recreating his life story, Scott goes on to locate his own ancestry firmly within the Border region: “Every Scottishman has a pedigree. It is a national prerogative as unalienable as his pride and his poverty” (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 2). Following this, Scott gives an account of his paternal lineage as preserved by family tradition, with the memories of Walter Scotts of ages past evoked and rejuvenated with each successive generation. Scott’s own place in the chain as modern day Border minstrel is explicitly stated:

My father’s grandfather was Walter Scott, well known in Teviotdale by the surname of Beardie. He was the second son of Walter Scott, first Laird of Raeburn, who was third son of Sir William Scott, and the grandson of Walter Scott, commonly called in tradition Auld Watt, of Harden. I am therefore lineally descended from that ancient chieftain, whose name I have made to ring in many a ditty, and from his fair dame, the Flower of Yarrow – no bad genealogy [sic] for a Border Minstrel. (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 2.)

The family memories which Scott heard both at Sandyknowe and later in Edinburgh are broad in scope. They encompass a past of reiving and
depredation characteristic of the Borders region, from whose people Scott was proud to be “lineally descended”. This is a phrase of which Scott was particularly fond; in later years, his family coats of arms and shields would adorn the ceiling of the entrance hall at Abbotsford in a visual display of this lineage. Family tales had also survived from the time of the Covenanters. Memories of the illegal outdoor conventicles held in the latter half of the 17th century, recalled by Scott’s great-grandmother Mary Campbell of Silvercraigs (born c. 1665), had clearly been passed down the generations, as in the case of this rather genteel ‘blanket preaching’ that Scott would describe to Lady Abercorn some years later:

My father’s grandmother who lived to the uncommon age of 98 years perfectly remembered being carried when a girl to these field-preachings with her mother where the clergyman thundered from the top of a rock, and the ladies sate upon their side-saddles which were placed on the turf for their accommodation [sic] while the men all stood round armed with swords and pistols and watches were kept on each neighbouring eminence to give notice of the approach of the soldiers. I mention these minute circumstances in order to make your Ladyship aware how nearly our oral and family traditions connect themselves with these disorderly times. (Scott to Lady Abercorn, 28 Dec 1816; SL 4: 342-3.)

Scott’s pride in his Border ancestors, who lived by codes of conduct not recognised by the governing power, are not so far removed from the Jacobite tales to which he also listened with delight as a child. In Scott’s great-grandfather Walter Scott, known as “Beardie” (1679-1729), the Borderer and the Jacobite found a satisfying union. An ardent Jacobite who had taken part in the first uprising of 1689-92 and had fought with John Graham of Claverhouse
at Killiecrankie, the nickname “Beardie” apparently stemmed from a vow taken following the Jacobite defeat not to shave until the Stuart monarchy was restored (see also SL 4: 153). Some of the inhabitants of Smailholm parish, including his grandparents, would have been alive during the second Jacobite uprising of 1715, and many could remember the events of 1745-6. Mr Curle, for example, the husband of Barbara, one of Scott’s paternal aunts, had been present at the execution of Jacobite sympathisers in Carlisle after Culloden in 1746 (see Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 13).

This rebellious streak was also recounted with pride by Scott in the case of Beardie’s son Robert Scott, Scott’s grandfather (1699-1775). Scott recounts with a degree of pride his grandfather’s reckless purchase of a horse using thirty pounds lent to him by a shepherd named Hogg, the entire sum of money with which Robert Scott was suppose to stock the farm of Sandyknowe. However, due to his grandfather’s proficiency as a horseman, a skill which Scott himself prized highly, the horse was presented to the landowner, John Scott of Harden, and shown off “to such advantage that he sold him for double the original price” (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 4). Robert Scott died aged seventy-six in January 1775, when Scott would have been three and a half years old, but like Beardie’s exploits, those Robert Scott had become the stuff of family legend. For his own part, Scott’s own memories of his grandfather were simply of “a venerable old man with white hair” (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 12). Scott’s
childhood memories must have been augmented by family members, as well as by Scott’s later research into his genealogy.\textsuperscript{38}

Although tales of the menfolk of the Scott family had clearly become a part of family legend, Scott’s grandmother Barbara Scott, née Haliburton (b. 1706) and her daughter Janet (1733-1805),\textsuperscript{39} appear to have been the main sources of generational memory at Sandyknowe. Of his grandmother, Scott recalled:

The local information, which, I conceive, had some share in forming my future taste and pursuits, I derived from the old songs and tales which then formed the amusement of a retired country family. My grandmother, in whose youth the old Border depredations were matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Watt of Harden, Wight Willie of Aikwood, Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead, and other heroes – merrymen all of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John. A more recent hero, but not of less note, was the celebrated \textit{Diel of Littledean}, whom she well remembered, as he had married her mother’s sister. Of this extraordinary person I learned many a story, grave and gay, comic and warlike. (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 13; original italics.)

Due to the comparative length of his grandmother’s frame of reference to the past, her capacities as tradition bearer and active participant are united in the above passage. Scott’s words provide no evidence for her having sung him ballads, but it is of course important to bear in mind that the ballad narratives would often be recounted as stories rather than songs. The exploits of characters such as Wat of Harden or Jamie Telfer were part of a wider oral tradition received through the recollections of a still older generation rather

\textsuperscript{38} For example, the exact relationship of his grandfather’s second cousin George MacDougall of Makerstoun to the family is supplied in a footnote of 1826 (see Hewitt 1981: 263-4).

\textsuperscript{39} See Rogers 1877: 39.
than solely enshrined in song. Other characters such as her uncle “the Deil of Littledean” were remembered first hand, and family connections appear to be an important element. The childhood memories may therefore be perceived as comprising points of intersection between communicative and cultural memories. They concern the distant past at the same time as they recall the people and places through which they were transmitted. Although Scott’s grandmother was not a direct source for the *Minstrelsy* version of the ballad “Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead”, it is clear that the ballad was an integral part of the web of cultural remembrance of which Scott first became aware at Sandyknowe Farm, and connected closely to both his immediate family and ancestors. Such acts of recollection embody dynamic collective consciousness of family ties which not only informed Scott’s own identity, but also framed the ballads’ place in the past as significant symbols of cultural and collective identity.

**Reading, Remembering, Reciting**

A closer inspection of the interplay of orality and literacy within Scott’s *Memoir* also reveals connections to the theme of memory and intriguing references to the mnemonic arts which Scott himself termed “a sort of technical memory” (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 38). The representation of Scott’s early childhood influences as stemming from both oral and literary sources is a striking feature of the *Memoir*, and it is clear that both frames of reference play an integral part in his own memory and recollections. Within the *Memoir*, Scott
displays a particular interest in recalling the ways in which the oral and written could be retained in the brain, and retrieved at a future date. The following extracts elucidate how frequently these two planes of reference were intermingled in the case of Scott’s educational trajectory, as words read aloud from the page are committed to memory and then recited aloud. Again the memories come hand in hand with those of the person connected to them, in this case his aunt Janet who taught him to read:

Two or three old books, which lay in the windowseat, were explored for my amusement in the tedious winter days. Automathes and Ramsay’s Teatable Miscellany were my favourites, although, at a later period, an odd volume of Josephus’s Wars of the Jews divided my partiality. My kind and affectionate aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose memory will ever be dear to me, used to read these works to me with admirable patience, until I could repeat long passages by heart. (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 13.)

Scott also recalls being naturally drawn to the genres of the ballad and the epic, and refers to both as “poetry”. In this regard, his mother Anne Rutherford is mentioned for the first time in connection with his literary development, indicating that this memory recalls a period which followed Scott’s return from Sandyknowe:

My lameness and my solitary habits had made me a tolerable reader, and my hours of leisure were usually spent in reading aloud to my mother Pope’s translation of Homer, which, excepting a few traditionary ballads, was the first poetry which I perused. [...] I got by heart, not as a task, but almost without intending it, the passages with which I was most pleased, and used to recite them aloud, both when alone and to others. (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 19.)
Folklore scholars have long recognised that memory, or more specifically the dynamic process of reconstruction inherent in the act of recollection, is a key component in oral tradition, and one in which the mnemonic processes that aid the re-enactment can also attain a ritualistic status (see Friedman, in Finnegan 1977: 53). References to the act of reading and listening are connected to memorisation in almost every case in the Memoir. In this way, Scott describes his childhood self as steeped in an oral and literary heritage, his imagination nourished by books and tales, and enhanced by his particular ability to commit both what he heard and read to memory. For example, Scott’s progression from effortless memorisation to verbalisation is referred to once more with regard to the poetry of Edmund Spenser, where Scott recalled, “[a]s I had always a wonderful facility in retaining in my memory whatever verses pleased me, the quantity of Spenser’s stanzas which I could repeat was really marvellous. (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 26.)

Scott’s first encounter with Percy’s Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (1765), the collection of ballads which would form the blueprint for the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, occurred when he was around eleven years of age. In the Reliques Scott was elated to find the ballads of his childhood treated “as the subject of sober research” (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 28) and it is interesting to note that Scott’s famous recollection of his encounter with this collection in the Memoir is connected not with a person this time but with the memory of the place where he first encountered it:
I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a huge platanas tree in the ruins of what had been intended for an old fashioned arbour in the garden [...] To read and to remember was in this instance the same thing and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows and all who would hearken to me with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 28.)

In the examples above, orality and literacy are represented not only as co-existent but complementary. The Memoir recounts a literary coming of age, in which books and the exploration of them under the guidance of Scott’s aunt Janet form the early part of his education alongside the traditional tales of Border ‘depredations’ from his grandmother, discussed above. As the figure of Scott’s patient aunt Janet introduced him to the world of letters, she was in a sense able to guide him in a negotiation of literacy and orality, acting as intermediary between the text and an impressionable young child.

During his life, Scott also accumulated an extensive collection of chapbooks and broadsides, which he began to gather in his youth,40 and the delight he took in narrating ballads and poems aloud had its roots in his childhood, when, as Scott wrote to Anna Seward in 1806, “in the height of my enthusiasm, I was apt to disregard all hints that my recitations became tedious” (Scott to Anna Seward, c. Sep. 1806; SL 1: 320). In the entertaining account of his spouting forth the ballad of “Hardyknute”, Scott recalls commanding the space around him and silencing the dour Dr Duncan who has paid the Scotts of Sandyknowe a visit for the purpose of a ‘sober chat’:

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The ballad of Hardyknute I was early master of, to the great annoyance of almost our only visitor, the worthy clergyman of the parish, Dr Duncan, who had not patience to have a sober chat interrupted by my shouting forth this ditty. Methinks I now see his tall, thin, emaciated figure, his legs cased in clasped gambadoes, and his face of a length that would have rivalled the Knight of La Mancha’s, and hear him exclaiming, “One may as well speak in the mouth of a cannon as where that child is.” (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 13-14.)

In conjuring up this vividly comic scene, Scott’s self-deprecating wit serves to temper, but not to suppress, the memory feat of the evidently precocious little boy. Such juxtaposition is characteristic of Scott’s representation of his own past in the Memoir and much of his correspondence. We may imagine that Scott is drawing upon his memories in a dual sense, his own recollection of his childish behaviour and the scene which was no doubt recounted to him by his family in the years that followed. As noted above, “Hardyknute” was a particular favourite of Scott’s, as well as being one of the most famous ballad forgeries of the 18th century. Scott mentions the ballad in the Minstrelsy, comparing a line from the poem to a line in the ballad “Fause Foodrage” (MSB 32) and surmising that “the author of the Hardyknute copied the old ballad – if the coincidence be not altogether accidental.” (MSB 1802; 2; 73.)

Committing the ballads he loved to memory was, for Scott, an effortless act born of enthusiasm, paving the way for the revitalisation of the memory of his own ancestors such as Auld Wat of Harden under Scott’s self-assumed mantle of Border minstrel. However, the retention of information which had to be memorised as part of a more formal education proved more of a trial. Aligning himself once more with the old Borderers he knew in his youth, Scott
noted the precedence the ballads took in his memory over the facts and figures of book-centred history:

My memory […] seldom failed to preserve most tenaciously a favourite passage of poetry, a playhouse ditty, or, above all, a Border-raid ballad; but names, dates, and the other technicalities of history, escaped me in a most melancholy degree. (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 26-27.)

Writing as one whose projected self embraced the intellectual duality of lawyer and poet, Scott places the fickle, haphazard nature of his imagination in opposition to the dry memorisation of facts learned by rote in the schoolroom. The cannon simile of Dr Duncan’s, above, is put to a different use in Scott’s description of his memory of his schooldays, where he compares his memory of events to “one of the large, old fashioned stone cannons of the Turks – very difficult to load well and discharge, but making a powerful effect when by good chance any object did come within range of its shot” (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 27).

Recollected memories have a dual aspect, where the act of recollection is referred to at the same time as a past state of memory. Scott writes here of his memory in the past tense, reflecting on a stage in his education and a cluttered mind brought about by an enormous amount of undirected reading. “My appetite for books” he wrote a little further on in the Memoir, “was as ample and indiscriminating as it was indefatigable, and I since have had too frequently reason to repent that few ever read so much, and to so little purpose” (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 27). In 1796, writing to the antiquarian George Chalmers, Scott repented not having recorded his own memories at an earlier
stage: “I have to regret that I have not committed to writing a number of little traditionary anecdotes which I have carelessly trusted to the fallible register of my memory...” (Scott to George Chalmers, 17 Feb. 1796; SL 1: 43-44). In the above writings on memory, then, there is a sense that preservation through the written word will militate against the randomness of the acts of memory described above. The Minstrelsy (which the letter to Chalmers of course anticipates) would be an example of Scott embarking on this endeavour.

Although Scott evidently drew upon the Borders lineage of his father’s family in depicting his ancestry in the Memoir, he attributed his own skill in portraying the past to the capacious memories of his mother Margaret Anne Rutherford (1739-1819) and his maternal great-aunt Margaret Swinton (c. 1710-1780), both of whom appear to have been vivid storytellers and important sources of family memory. His maternal aunt Christian Rutherford, moreover, was evidently a singer, and a source for the Minstrelsy.

Margaret Swinton, Anne Rutherford and Christian Rutherford

Margaret Swinton

Margaret Swinton was a member of a well-established Berwickshire family whose ancestry can be traced back to the Earls of Douglas.41 Her sister Jean, Scott’s maternal grandmother, married Professor John Rutherford, a highly respected medical professor who was appointed to the Chair of Theory and

41 In a journal entry of June 6, 1826, Scott reflected “my heart always warms to that Swinton connection. So faithful to old Scottish feelings...” (WS Journal, 6 Jun. 1826; in Anderson 1998: 177).
Practice of Medicine at the University of Edinburgh in 1726. Jean Swinton had only one daughter, Anne, and died young. Following her death, John Rutherford married a Miss Mackay. Christian Rutherford, Scott’s aunt, friend and confidante who will be discussed below, was a child of this second marriage.

It appears that it was particularly from the Swinton side of the family that Scott heard tales of aristocratic scandal and tragedy: we know, for example, that the story behind the novel *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819) was told by Margaret Swinton and passed on to her niece Anne Rutherford. Margaret Swinton seems to have fulfilled the role of grandmother to the Scott children in Edinburgh, passing on a wealth of historical tales connected to the family which Scott retained in his memory throughout his life. She lived in Charles Street in Edinburgh, near George Square, and so was in very close proximity to her niece’s young family as they grew up. Scott’s references to his great-aunt are vivid in their depiction of the context in which this and many other tales were told to him and his brothers and sisters. In the following appendix note to *Peveril of the Peak* (1823) emphasis is once more placed on the communicative memories of the older generation, as Scott acknowledges his great-aunt as the source for the original tale behind *The Bride of Lammermoor*:

This lady, by name Mrs Margaret Swinton, and a daughter of that ancient house, was a sister of my maternal grandmother, and of course my grand-aunt. She was, as often happens on such occasions, our constant resource in sickness, or when we tired of noisy play, and closed around her to listen to her tales. As she might be supposed to
look back to the beginning of the last century, the fund which supplied us with amusement often related to events of that period. I may here notice that she told me the unhappy story of the Bride of Lammermoor, being nearly related to the Lord president whose daughter was the heroine of that melancholy tragedy. (Scott 2012 [1823]: 2, 235-6.)

A further reference to Margaret Swinton in the introduction to *Chronicles of the Canongate* (1827) emphasises her atmospheric style of telling the same tale:

I may mention, for example’s sake, that the terrible catastrophe of the Bride of Lammermoor actually occurred in a Scottish family of rank. The female relative, by whom the melancholy tale was communicated to me many years since, was a near connexion of the family in which the event happened, and always told it with an appearance of melancholy mystery, which enhanced the interest. (Scott 2000 [1827]: 5.)

Scott also refers to Margaret Swinton in a letter to Joanna Baillie in 1822, in which he discusses his plans to create a narrative poem based on the tale told by his aunt about an incident which purportedly took place in 1333 at the battle of Halidon Hill near Berwick-upon-Tweed, during the Wars of Independence. As the following extract from the letter shows, Scott is uncertain of the tale’s historical accuracy but very clear as to the events as they were by his aunt, which is indicative of the strength of the recollected narrative:

I am I say strangely tempted to write […] a dramatic scene on an incident which happened at the battle of Halidon hill (I think) – it was to me a nursery tale often told me by Mrs Margaret Swinton sister of my maternal grand mother a fine old maiden lady of high blood and of as high a mind who was lineally descended from one of the actors. […]

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Tell me if I can clamper up the story into a sort of single scene will it answer your purpose.42 (Scott to Joanna Baillie, 10 Feb. 1822; SL 7: 62-3.)

Later in the letter Scott describes the way in which his recall of the tale itself is intimately bound up not only with his own recollection of his great-aunt’s narration, but also with her violent death, an event which occurred when Scott was still a child:

The story with many others of the same kind is consecrated to me by the remembrance of the narrator with her brown silk gown and triple ruffles [sic] and her benevolent face which was always beside our beds when there were childish complaints among us. Poor aunt Margaret had a most shocking fate being murdered by a favourite maid-servant in a fit of insanity when I was about ten years old. The catastrophe was much owing to the scrupulous delicacy and high courage of my poor relation who would not have the assistance of men called in for exposing the unhappy wretch her servant. (Scott to Joanna Baillie, 10 Jul. 1822; SL 7: 63.)

This horrific incident took place on 8 November 1780, when Scott was nine years old. The murder was documented in the local press of the period43 and the trial of Jean Blair, the maidservant, is recorded in The Caledonian Mercury on 11 November 1780.44 It might be suggested that the deep impression left by Margaret Swinton’s violent death lent extra mnemonic power to the tales which she told, particularly the one which Scott later fashioned into The Bride of Lammermoor (1819). In the Magnum Opus edition of the novel, Scott writes

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42 Halidon Hill: a Dramatic Sketch from Scottish History appeared in 1822. Scott was dissatisfied with his attempts (see Scott to George Byron, 25 Jun. 1822; SL 7: 193).
44 The article appeared in The Caledonian Mercury, 11 Nov. 1780 (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk. 7/10/13). Blair was acquitted of the charge of murder on the grounds of insanity, and confined to an asylum.
that he “feels himself now at liberty to tell the tale as he had it from connexions of his own, who lived very near the period, and were closely related to the family of the Bride” (Scott 2012 [1830]: 335). He goes on to reveal the identity of the Dalrymples of Wigtownshire, the original family involved in the events, in which Janet Dalrymple descended into insanity on being forced into a politically advantageous marriage with David Dunbar, and stabbed him on their wedding night.  

Although not directly connected to the ballads, then, it is clear that Margaret Swinton’s old-world view and her skilful narration of the tales she connected to her family and friends were an integral part of Scott’s own memory frameworks and a resource he drew upon in envisaging his family’s collective past. In the short story My Aunt Margaret’s Mirror (1829), the theme of mirrors and reflections is threaded through the framing narrative: Scott resurrects his long dead great-aunt to tell the tale of the clairvoyant mirror to a protagonist who is evidently a fictional version of himself. In the introduction that precedes the tale, Scott indicates that the memory of his great-aunt, the tales she told and the manner of her sudden death are inseparable:

…it is a mere transcript, or at least with very little embellishment, of a story that I remembered being struck with in my childhood, when told at the fireside by a lady of eminent virtues, and no inconsiderable share of talent, one of the ancient and honourable house of Swinton. She was a kind relation of my own, and met her death in a manner so shocking, being killed in a fit of insanity by a female attendant who had been attached to her person for half a lifetime, that I cannot now recall her memory, child as I was when the painful incident occurred, without a

45 Claire Lamont has detailed Scott’s treatment of the original tale in the novel (see Lamont 1980: 113-26).
painful re-awakening of perhaps the first images of horror that the scenes of real life stamped on my mind. (Scott 2012 [1831]: 2, 606.)

Anne Rutherford

As mentioned above, Anne Rutherford was another source of the tale behind The Bride of Lammermoor, which she herself had presumably learned from her aunt Margaret. In the initial stages of writing the novel based on the tale, Scott apparently had some doubts as to whether the conversion of the tale he had been accustomed to hearing at the fireside to a longer literary form would be a success. In a letter to James Ballantyne in September 1818, before he was beset by an attack of gallstones the following March that would slow the progress of the novel, Scott wondered “…if I shall make it so effective in two volumes as my mother does in her quarter of an hour’s crack by the fireside?” (Scott to James Ballantyne, 10 Sep. 1818; SL 5: 186.)

In the event, the publication of the novel coincided with his mother’s death in 1819 at the age of eighty-seven. Scott’s references to her in his correspondence at this time reveal much about Scott’s perception of his mother as a bearer of cultural memory and family traditions. As with his paternal grandmother, Scott refers particularly to his mother’s close proximity to past events and the way such events were connected to family members. In a letter to his friend and former ward Margaret Clephane (by this time Lady Compton), Scott described his mother’s close connection to the past:
I think you never saw her though you would have liked her very much for she was a most acute judge of the present time and looked a league back into that which has passed away – a great genealogist but of that entertaining kind that she seldom counted a link without adding a pleasant or instructive anecdote like a catholic who says a prayer to every bead… (Scott to Lady Margaret Compton, 14 Jan. 1820; SL 6: 112).

Here the striking comparison between the recounting of family genealogy and the repetition of the rosary emphasises mnemonic and oral aspects of the ritual by which memories of family members are maintained, and transmitted, through their connection to stories and anecdotes. Writing to Lady Louisa Stewart some days later, Scott again refers to the acuteness of his mother’s memory, her age and her knowledge of family connections, whilst alluding to her influence on his own work. As with his grandmother, Scott’s concern here is the oral transmission of memory over generations, which in the case below concerned recollections of events which occurred in the mid-17th century:

She had a mind peculiarly well stored with much acquired information and natural talent, and as she was very old, and had an excellent memory, she could draw without the least exaggeration or affectation the most striking pictures of the past age. If I have been able to do anything in the way of painting the past times, it is very much from the studies with which she presented me. She connected a long period of time with the present generation, for she remembered, and had often spoken with, a person who perfectly recollected the battle of Dunbar,\(^{46}\) and Oliver Cromwell's subsequent entry into Edinburgh. She preserved her faculties to the very day before her final illness; for our friends Mr. and Mrs. Scott of Harden visited her on the Sunday; and, coming to our house after, were expressing their surprise at the alertness of her mind, and the pleasure which she had in talking over both ancient and modern events. She had told them with great accuracy the real story of the Bride of Lammermuir, and pointed out wherein it differed from the novel.

\(^{46}\) The Battle of Dunbar took place 3 Sept. 1650.
She had all the names of the parties, and detailed (for she was a great genealogist) their connexion with existing families. (Scott to Lady Louisa Stewart, 27 Jan. 1820; SL 6: 118-9.)

Anne Rutherford evidently knew ballads, particularly those connected with the family, as Scott took down “Murder of Lord Wariston” (Child 194), concerning the murder of a distant relation, from her recitation. This ballad was originally contained in the list Scott sent to Percy in 1801 (see introduction) but it was not included in the Minstrelsy. There is no doubt that these two women were very important bearers of memory within the family, expanding and enriching Scott’s imaginative reference to the past.

**Christian Rutherford**

Christian Rutherford (1759-1819) was Scott’s aunt, the half sister of his mother, and his friend and confidante whom he addressed with the affectionate nickname of “Miss Critty” or simply “Chritty” (see Scott to Christian Rutherford, 5 Sep. 1794; SL 1: 34). Scott connected his aunt directly to two Minstrelsy ballads, “Cospatrick” (MSB 36) and “Prince Robert” (MSB 37) which appear consecutively in the Minstrelsy’s romantic ballad section (MSB 1802; 2; 117-128). The two ballads, Scott states, have been taken down “from recitation of a lady nearly related to the editor” (MSB 1802; 2; 117; 124), she was identified by Lockhart in the 1833 edition (MSB 1833; 3: 263).

On textual evidence, as Harry has asserted, it is most likely that the primary source for “Cospatrick” was Mrs Brown’s manuscript entitled “Gil

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47 Robert Jamieson published this ballad as “The Laird of Warriston” in Popular Ballads and Songs (1806), in which he noted Anne Rutherford as a source for the ballad (Jamieson 1806 1: 109). My thanks to Dr Sigrid Rieuwerts for this information.
Brenton” (Harry 1976: 226) and while it is likely that Christian Rutherford knew the ballad, her only contribution may have been the title, eagerly adopted by Scott as a common Borders name in preference to “Gil Brenton” (Child 5). This title allowed Scott to make a local connection to “the Earl of Dunbar in the days of Wallace and Bruce” (MSB 1802; 2; 117). Christian Rutherford appears to have been Scott’s sole source for “Prince Robert”, and both this ballad and “Cospatrick” have darkly violent and sexual themes: “Cospatrick” concerns a murderous bridegroom who only spares his new wife when it is shown that the child she is carrying is in fact his from a previous encounter, while the Prince Robert of the second ballad is poisoned by his malicious mother on his wedding day, prompting his bride to die of grief. These two ballads are not well-known, and the fact that Christian Rutherford knew them may well be evidence of her possessing a wide repertoire of songs. This proposal is supported by the fact that, according to Scott, Christian’s sister Jean “also used to sing very prettily” (Scott to Lady Anne Barnard, 18 Jul. 1823; SL 8: 39). It would appear that Scott did, indeed, come from a family of singers.

Ballad References in the “Jessie” letters, c. 1788-1792.

Scott’s connection to Kelso, which began with his stay at Sandyknowe, was deepened by another spell of ill-health in 1781, which occasioned his being sent away from Edinburgh once more at the age of eleven. In Kelso, Scott initially stayed mainly with his aunts Janet and Barbara at the ‘Garden cottage’

48 In this extract Scott is referring to the song “Auld Robin Gray” which both sisters sang, and acknowledged Lady Anne Barnard as the author.
today known as Waverley Lodge. It was here he received tuition from Lancelot Whale, before attending Kelso Grammar School where Whale had become headmaster (see Johnson 1970; 1: 53.) As Scott grew older, he began to be an increasingly frequent guest at Rosebank, the house owned by his uncle, Captain Robert Scott (1739-1804). Letters written at this time allude to his enthusiasm for balladry and local history, providing another perspective on the early years represented in the Memoir and the young Scott’s burgeoning antiquarian interests. In particular, early letters from Scott addressed to “Jessie” appear to have stemmed from a youthful affair which lasted approximately four or five years, from c. 1788 to 1792.49

These letters are of particular interest because they contain some of Scott’s earliest references to ballads, and it is clear that these are bound up with memories of his own childhood.50 Reflecting on his poetic endeavours in one of the surviving letters to his sweetheart, Scott referred to his familiarity with ballads heard “from the earliest period of my existence” (Scott to “Jessie”, c. 1787; SL 1: 4) and later commented “of ballads and romances I think I have held a longer acquaintance than have I with any other kind of learning” (Scott to “Jessie”, c. 1787; SL 1: 7). Interestingly, however, the two ballads he discusses in most detail are those heard from an Irish servant at Bath, where Scott and his aunt Janet spent a year between the summers of 1775 and 1776,

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49 Grierson dates the first of the ‘Jessie’ letters to 1787 when Scott was seventeen or eighteen.
50 Jessie’s surname is unknown; biographers such as Edgar Johnson have identified her as the daughter of a Kelso shopkeeper whom Scott probably met when attending the grammar school there in his late teens, and wooed in his letters with scraps of poetry and ballads (see Johnson 1970; 1: 67-71).
in the hope of a water cure for Scott’s lameness. He would have been aged four to five at the time:

I remember in my childhood when staying at Bath for my health with a kind aunt of mine, there was an Irish servant in the house where we lodged, and she once sung me two ballads which made a great impression on me at the time. One filled me with horror. It was about a mason who because he had not been paid for work he had done for a certain nobleman, when that lord was absent, conveyed himself into the castle with the assistance of a treacherous nurse and murdered the lady and her children with circumstances of great barbarity. The other was a tale of attempted murder signally foiled, the subject of which if I remember right is stated to have been a Scottish Knight, but it is to be hoped he was born elsewhere. I have enclosed an attempt at a ballad [as] similar to the last as my memory will allow, but I am afraid it possesses nothing of the merit of the original. Still it may serve to amuse you, and after that it may be destroyed as soon as you please. (Scott to “Jessie”, c. 1787; SL 1: 4.)

In response to Jessie’s request Scott sent her a version of the first ballad, “Lankin”, in his next letter. He apparently wrote the ballad down from memory, interspersing it with a narrative commentary when his memory failed. As Jessie did not destroy Scott’s letters as he requested, these two ballad versions are also extant. These letters are transcribed in an unidentified manuscript held in the Forster collection of the V&A Museum entitled “Walter Scott and his Contemporaries”. “Lankin” (also known as “Lamkin” or “Lambkin”, Child 93) is a widely known ballad. Its graphically violent narrative depicts the revenge of an unpaid mason who murders his employer’s wife and child with the aid of the family’s treacherous nursemaid. It is therefore little wonder that this ballad made a deep impression on a small child,

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51 Extracts from this manuscript concerned with the Jessie affair have been published by Davidson Cook under the title New Love-Poems by Sir Walter Scott. Discovered in the Narrative of an unknown Love Episode with Jessie ___ of Kelso (1932).
particularly one who, in his own words, was attracted to tales of “the wonderful and the terrible” (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 19). “Lamkin” was evidently known in the Borders, being one of the ballads collected by Hogg for Scott in 1803 (NLS MS 877, f. 245r). In Hogg’s version, the ballad is localised in that the Laird of Lariston (in Roxburghshire) and his family are the victims of the mason’s revenge. Although Scott was aware of various different versions of this ballad at the time he was preparing the Minstrelsy, he did not include it, probably as it fell into the class he called “Romantic or popular ballads” of which his collection was, as he wrote to Percy, “much larger than I propose to use” (Scott to Percy, 6 Oct. 1800; SL 12: 168-169).

Scott calls the second ballad attached to the letter quoted above “The False Knight and the King’s Daughter”. It appears to be his own creative rendering of a ballad recorded by Child as “Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight” (Child 4), although versions exist under a multitude of different names including “The Water o’ Wearies Well”, “The Outlandish Knight”, “May Colven” or “False Sir John” (see ESPB 1: 22-23). In most versions, a woman outwits a man who has murdered his previous wives by lulling him to sleep and stabbing or drowning him instead. In both cases, we can be reasonably confident that Scott was drawing upon his own memory and not on a printed or manuscript source; certainly his versions bear little resemblance to those published in Herd’s Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs (1776), to which Scott may conceivably have had access to at this time. (See “Lammikin”, in Herd, 1973 [1776]; 1: 145-148; “May Colvin”, Herd, 1973 [1776]; 1: 93-95.)

Although the references to ballads in these letters are consistent with a
lifelong connection made by Scott between ballad lore and childhood memories, Scott makes no direct references to his childhood stays at Sandyknowe in the letters to “Jessie”. It is also interesting that the direct song references in these letters are connected to an Irish servant, widening the reference points beyond Jessie’s native Kelso. The fact that Jessie was apparently conversant with the song traditions of the local area is probably the reason Scott does not go into his own background in his letters. As he remarked loftily, “of Scottish songs you are sufficiently familiar – you would not deserve to be considered a Scottish lassie were you ignorant of them” (Scott to Jessie, c. 1787; SL 1: 7). In Scott’s Memoir, begun some twenty years later, the context within which he himself placed the Border ballads and tales had solidified into a more compact, foundational frame of memory to be recollected in the wake of a substantial body of literary work.

Conclusions

Through an exploration of the mnemonic community surrounding Scott as he grew up as well as his own representations of memory and autobiographical recollection, this chapter has examined the members of Scott’s immediate family who were the key bearers of tradition at this stage of his life. In foregrounding important characters such as his mother Anne Rutherford and Margaret Swinton, his maternal great-aunt, Scott’s emphasis was not, in this instance, solely on the ballads, but rather on the broader spectrum of oral narratives in a memory culture of which the ballads were an integral part.

Scott’s representation of his own intellectual and imaginative
development is characterised by an interaction of oral and literary influences. These are coexistent and defy easy separation, a fact which is important to bear in mind when considering the sources from which Scott was later to fashion the *Minstrelsy*. Scott spent a great deal of his youth surrounded by members of the older generation, and his recollections of family tales illuminate the intertwined frameworks of people, past and place that feed into the creation and mediation of cultural memory. It is particularly notable that the main bearers of these memories within his family were female relations, namely Barbara Haliburton, Anne Rutherford, Margaret Swinton, and that in describing their role in connecting his identity with the past of the region and the wider nation, Scott places an emphasis on their age and far-reaching memories. His aunts Christian and Jean Rutherford were evidently singers, and the fact that Scott’s mother knew the rare ballad “The Laird of Warriston” suggests that she may have had more well-known songs in her repertoire too. Overall, it is evident that Scott came from a family to whom singing and tales were an integral part of the ways in which memories of family lineage were transmitted, and his letters to “Jessie” reflect a wide acquaintance with songs drawn from outside the environs of Kelso, which he could draw upon in order to entertain his sweetheart.
Chapter 4.

The Shortreed Memoir

Introduction

A native of Jedburgh, Robert Shortreed (1762-1829), acted as Scott’s guide around the more remote parts of Roxburghshire during the expeditions between 1792 and 1799 that would subsequently be termed the “Liddesdale raids” (see Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 57). This chapter examines Robert Shortreed’s memories of his expeditions with Walter Scott in Roxburghshire and Selkirkshire which occurred during the 1790s and early 1800s, before and immediately after the publication of the Minstrelsy’s first edition in February 1802. His recollections were taken down by his son John Elliot Shortreed in 1824.

Robert Shortreed and his Family

Robert Shortreed was born in Jedburgh and baptised on 7 November 1762. He was the son of Thomas Shortreed (1733-1798) and Ann-Maria Kerr (1734-1798), and both the Shortreed and Kerr families had extensive and deep roots within the region. According to Tancred’s Annals of a Border Club, Thomas Shortreed had farmed extensively in the area, holding various tenancies at the farms of Lustruther, Westshiels, Jedhead, Hyndlee and Wolfelee, which are all

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52 See Shortreed family tree, NLS MS 8994, f.1.
located within fifteen miles of Jedburgh, to the south-west (see Tancred 1899: 441). Shortreed’s mother Ann-Maria was the daughter of William Kerr, Laird of Abbotrule, and it was through Ann-Maria’s nephew Charles Kerr, the son of her brother Patrick, that Scott and Shortreed would be introduced in 1792.

Shortreed entered the legal profession as a young man, beginning business in the office of James Fair of Langlee. His appointment as Sheriff Substitute of Roxburghshire may be dated to the early 1790s, according to the account in which Shortreed tells his son that Scott lost an appeal case “shortly after I was appointed Sheriff Substitute” (Shortreed, in Wilson, 1932: 61). Lockhart dates this event to the Autumnal assizes of 1793 or 1794 (Lockhart 1902; 1: 218-219). Following his appointment, Shortreed married Margaret, daughter of his former employee James Fair, in 1795. According to the Shortreed family tree preserved in the National Library of Scotland, Shortreed and Margaret went on to have no fewer than eleven children, of whom nine survived: Thomas, James, John Elliot, Robert, William, Andrew, Margaret, Pringle and Mary.53 Finding employment for his many sons became a chief concern for Shortreed in later years, and the following brief overview of their careers shows the close connection to Scott that the family retained. Thomas, the eldest, appears to have been born outside wedlock in 1794. He became a valued assistant of Scott’s at Abbotsford and later took up the position of Procurator Fiscal of Jedburgh, but died in 1826 aged only thirty-two. In an age of expanding empire, five of Shortreed’s seven sons ended up seeking employment overseas. First to leave was his fifth son William (1804-1846)

53 See Shortreed family tree, MS 8994, f.1.
who received a cadetship with the East India Company in 1820. Towards the end of the same year, Shortreed applied to Scott for his help in securing a similar position for his second son James (1797-1874). The departure of William and James was followed in 1822 by Shortreed’s fourth son Robert (1801-1886), who left for Bombay as a cadet in the infantry and became an engineer on the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India from 1828-1836 (see Edney 1997: 347). Pringle Shortreed, the youngest son, received his commission in the Bengal army in 1825, but was able to return to Scotland at the close of his service. Shortreed’s sixth son Andrew (1805-1878) was originally employed in James Ballantyne’s printing business in Edinburgh before setting up his own printing business. In 1827 he left the business and travelled to China, where he established the newspaper North China Mail and became well known as a successful businessman and philanthropist, spelling his name ‘Shortrede’ (see Corson 1979: 648). John Elliot Shortreed (1799-1836; henceforth J. E. Shortreed), who took down his father’s recollections of Scott, worked as an agent for the British Linen Company before becoming a bank manager for the Provincial Bank of Ireland in Wexford. He returned to

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54 See letter from Shortreed to Scott, 26 Dec. 1820 (NLS MS 867, f. 128) and Scott to Lord Montagu, 7 Jan. 1821 (SL 6: 329-330) for Scott’s subsequent application to Montagu. Iain Gordon Brown provides a very useful overview of these social contexts in relation to Scott’s life and literature (see Brown 1999: 71-79).

55 The Great Trigonometrical Survey (GTS) was one of the projects overseen by the Survey of India and ran throughout most of the 19th century. The project used the technique of triangulation, then known as ‘trigonometrical survey’, and the achievements of the GTS included the mapping of British India and the measurements of Himalayan mountains Everest, K2, and Kanchenjunga.
Scotland and took up residence in Newington, Edinburgh, before his death in 1836.

Unlike the circumstances under which Laidlaw or Lockhart were later to set down their own recollections of Scott, Robert Shortreed related his anecdotes to his son while Scott was still alive. Scott took an active interest in the Shortreed family, providing references, recommendations and occupations for the numerous Shortreed sons, some of whom found employment at Abbotsford during the early 1820s. Thomas, the eldest, was a particular favourite with Scott, and he took Thomas’s death in 1826 as a hard blow (see Lockhart 1902: 8, 371). In turn, the Shortreeds took care to preserve accounts of their connection to Scott. Throughout the conversation between Robert and J. E. Shortreed, both father and son situate themselves and their family connections firmly within their own regional setting as well as emphasising their close connection to their erstwhile friend and benefactor.

According to Shortreed, his first meeting with Scott occurred in the Autumn of 1792, shortly after the latter's admission to the Faculty of Advocates. The two men were introduced by Shortreed’s cousin Charles Kerr of Abbotrule (1767-1821), writer to the Signet and a friend of Scott’s from their Edinburgh College days. Shortly after this, Scott and Shortreed made their first expedition into Liddesdale together. They shared a familial

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56 See list of testaments confirmed in Commissary Court Records for Midlothian, 1836+

57 Kerr is alluded to by Lockhart in an anecdote concerning the seventeen-year-old Scott’s intervention in reconciling Kerr with his family following his fall from grace due to transgressions which Lockhart obliquely terms “habits of a looser description” (Lockhart 1902; 1: 99). Following the quarrel with his family, Kerr had been banished first to the Isle of Man, where he had made a rash marriage, and then to the West Indies. (See Johnson 1970; 1: 90.)
connection through the marriage of Jean Rutherford of Know-South, Shortreed’s second cousin twice removed, to Scott’s paternal uncle Thomas Scott in 1780, 58 a man whom Scott was later to praise as “the best piper in the South of Scotland” (Scott to the Duke of Buccleuch, 14 Nov. 1818; SL 5: 219). Such a connection serves to illustrate the extensive yet interwoven nature of Border family networks and is further evidence that Scott’s own associations to the region, so viscerally felt, had firm roots in reality.

**Robert Shortreed’s Account**

The Shortreed family were actively involved in maintaining and propagating memories of their own heritage as well as their connection to Scott. As noted above, detailed family trees were constructed by Robert Shortreed’s son Andrew before he left for China in 1827. J. E. Shortreed took down his father’s early memories of Scott in the summer of 1824, initially presenting the account as one of oral testimony by laying out the text in interview format. The opening lines of the account aim to explain and contextualise the setting of the interview itself, establishing both J. E. Shortreed’s intent to capture recollections of Scott for posterity, and his father’s direct link with Scott himself:

I have long you know, Father, been desirous to get some account from you of the Journey made by Sir Walter Scott and you into Liddesdale and the West Country in quest of the materials for the ‘Border Minstrelsy,’ and indeed, as appears from the presentation on a Copy of

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58 See Corson 1979: 625; also the Shortreed family tree, NLS MS 8994, f.1).
his Poetical Works which he lately gave you, for all his works together. (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 57)

The “presentation” J. E. Shortreed refers to above is an acknowledgement inscribed by Scott within a volume of his collected works, which foregrounds the Border forays of their early days as the foundation of their friendship: “To Robert Shortreed, Esq., the friend of the author from youth to age, and his guide and companion upon many an expedition among the Border hills, in quest of materials of legendary lore…” (Lockhart 1903; 9: 287, footnote). During the conversation between father and son, J. E. Shortreed asked his father about various aspects of his relationship with Scott, from their first meeting to their friendship over the years. Robert Shortreed gave a lively, nostalgic account of their travels, including anecdotes about the places and people visited, some of which found their way into Scott’s later novels as well as the Minstrelsy.

Two manuscript copies of this account exist in the National Library of Scotland: MS 921 (ff. 82-97) and MS 8993 (ff. 94-112). Both manuscripts are marked with corrections and annotations, both in the hand of J. E. Shortreed. It would appear that MS 921 is the older of the two copies, written on paper which bears the watermark of H. Salmon, 1821. At first glance, MS 921 has been the more heavily edited of the two manuscripts and is laid out as an interview script. MS 8993 takes the form of continuous prose and has the appearance of a fair copy which J. E. Shortreed transcribed on good quality paper with a three centimetre binding margin on the left hand side. From a letter dated May 1833 from J. E. Shortreed to Lockhart which is also included
in MS 8993 it is likely that the version of the account in MS 8993 is a copy J. E. Shortreed created from MS 921 to send to Lockhart following both his father’s and Scott’s death. An extract from this letter reads as follows:

Understanding that you are engaged with The life of Sir Walter Scott, and in Editing his poetical works, I have transcribed some memoranda of conversations which I had with my Father on the subject of his tours in Liddesdale with Sir Walter, in the Summer of 1824, & now take the liberty of forwarding them to you lest there be anything of interest in them, which would otherwise be lost. I have copied them just as I found them amongst my papers – my father’s Scotch I fear may have few charms for you, however interesting it is to myself to have the memoranda [struck out: just] precisely as he spoke them… (J. E. Shortreed to Lockhart, 28 May 1833; MS 8993, f. 250r).

J. E. Shortreed’s assertion to Lockhart, above, that his father’s words are rendered “precisely as he spoke them”, and are therefore accurate in both form and content, alludes to the conversational aspect of the account, which is evidently strongly connected to his own memories of his late father. The account should therefore be seen as an attempt to capture the performative context of its creation, and becomes a contribution to the memory of Shortreed well as Scott. An additional linguistic aspect which should be taken into account is the Shortreed family’s connection to Dr John Jamieson (1759-1838), author of the *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* (1808). On the advice of Scott, Jamieson had consulted the Shortreeds about various dialectal words prior to the publication of the dictionary (see Rennie 2012: 182-5).

For his part, Lockhart acknowledges his use of the Shortreed material in his biography *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, whilst also emphasising his own familiarity with the anecdotes. Contrary to J. E. Shortreed’s misgivings
concerning the representation of his father’s dialect, Lockhart emphasises the value of reproducing the spoken dialect:

I am obliged to Mr John Elliot Shortreed, a son of Scott’s early friend, for some memoranda of his father’s conversations on this subject, which are the more interesting that they represent the worthy Sheriff-substitute’s dialect exactly as it was. These notes were written in 1824; and I shall make several quotations from them. I had, however, many opportunities of hearing Mr Shortreed’s stories from his own lips, having so often been under his hospitable roof in company with Sir Walter, who to the last always lodged there when any business took him to Jedburgh. (Lockhart 1902:1:219; italics are original.)

From the minor corrections and alterations to both manuscripts it is evident that J. E. Shortreed took a hand in editing his father’s recollections, adding information or removing what he deemed to be unsuitable passages. Shortreed’s claim that “I hae slepit double wi’ him since he was marriet, tae” (MS 921, f. 82r) is scored out in MS 8993, as is a reference to Scott riding “cheeky fu’ chowed” under the influence of alcohol (MS 921, f. 87r), while further information concerning family connections is added, such as the note that Jessie Scott of Falnash was “Mr S’s [Shortreed’s] cousin German” (MS 921, f. 88r).

We may also presume that J. E. Shortreed’s own recollections augmented the anecdotes that he heard from his father throughout their lives together. Lockhart’s comments, above, are testimony to the fact that Robert Shortreed enjoyed recounting these exploits in social settings, and the memories would have altered over time. The two existing texts might therefore
be considered retellings of several conversations which took place on the subject.

The extant manuscripts represent an oral/aural conversation between father and son, as the title etched upon MS 8993 affirms: “Conversations with my father on the Subject of his tours with Sir Walter Scott in Liddisdale” [*sic*] (see MS 8993: f. 94r). While it is impossible to ascertain the exact setting of the interview, or the extent to which the original conversation may have been embellished in the transition from speech to text, the circumstances which are represented reflect a transmission process which is both orally conveyed and explicitly concerned with remembering the events of some thirty years before. Rather than presenting Shortreed’s memory as a wholly accurate or infallible source of information, Shortreed’s account lends itself well to a case study of the process of performance and mediation involved in such acts of recollection. His memory is rich in its recall for names and places, and displays features characteristic of recollected memoirs, such as the temporal anchoring of an instance of episodic memory through reference to a significant life event (see Saunders 2008: 321-332). The night of the birth of Shortreed’s second son, for example, coincided with “ane o’ the daftest nichts we ever had thegither [...] when he came here to tell me o’s his approaching marriage. It was on the 30 Sepr. 1797, the very nicht your brother James was born” (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 62). Yet Shortreed’s memories are also characterised by a certain amount of ‘leaping and lingering’, characteristic of a recollected, selective narrative which seeks to entertain as well as inform. With a certain amount of meandering and apparent sudden shifts in subject, the speaker is led on by a
rough chronology and inspired by associations. For example, Shortreed has evidently forgotten or misremembered his own age at the time of the first expedition:

We made Seven raids a’ the gither, and our first expedition was in the Autumn of 1792. I had been introduced to Sir Walter a few days before, by my Cousin Charles Kerr of Abbotrule, at a Michaelmas Court in Jedburgh. I think Sir Walter asked me to guide him into Liddesdale, Charles Kerr probably having told him that I was intimately acquainted with the Country, and wi’ maist feck of the fouk in’t. Sir Walter had just passed Advocate, I was then little more than one and Twenty. (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 57.)

If the date of 1792 is correct, it is Scott who would have been twenty-one, while Shortreed would have been twenty-nine or thirty. Neither would Scott have been termed ‘Sir’ at the time of the account, but Shortreed’s respectful epithet reflects the contemporary context in which he related his anecdotes.

Reading Shortreed’s account as a memory text or site of memory is therefore to accept its status as a dynamic reinterpretation of past events. Indeed, such a recognition is integral to theories of cultural memory as a whole. Rigney has pointed out the need to escape from the constraint of the pursuit of perceived ‘authenticity’, which allows for a consideration of the mediation of the past as predicated on the needs of the present:

… certain things are remembered not because they are actually true of the past (which may or may not be the case) but because they are somehow meaningful in the present. In other words, “authenticity” may not always be relevant to memorial dynamics, and certain things may

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59 *feck*: the majority, the greater part.
be recalled because they are meaningful to those doing the recalling rather than because, from the historian’s perspective, they are actually true. (Rigney 2004: 381.)

As discussed in the previous chapter, Saunders’ consideration of the role of ‘life-writing’ as providing pathways into cultural memory also reflects on the necessary shift of perspective from the search for historical fact to memorial dynamics. Shortreed’s recollections of Walter Scott and the expeditions into Liddesdale may be considered as constituting one layer of such a memory culture. The information contained in the account is representative of the material from which cultural memories are recreated and perpetuated, through processes which Rigney refers to above as “memorial dynamics”. In the case of the Shortreeds, we have a text which is constructed partially through memory and partially through written notes. Each level is concerned with modes of memory, whether these are Shortreed’s memories of Scott, Shortreed’s own familial heritage and network, J. E Shortreed’s memories of his father, or the preservation of the Shortreed family name as regards their connection to Scott, whose own fame has ensured him a place in the country’s collective memory.

**Shortreed and the *Minstrelsy* ballads**

Scott’s forays into Liddesdale took place between 1792 and 1799. Shortreed introduced Scott to the social and cultural networks of Liddesdale, a district in the south-western corner of the county of Roxburgh which extends to approximately twenty-one miles from Peel Fell to the River Esk. As
Montgomerie has previously observed, the expeditions described in Shortreed’s account were not undertaken with the specific intention of collecting material for the Minstrelsy (see Montgomerie 1956 159-160). In fact, the Liddesdale expeditions, made when Scott’s Minstrelsy was a concept rather than an active project, had a range of different purposes, and his career and societal ambitions must have played no small part in his desire to get to know the Duke of Buccleuch’s extensive estates and tenants as well as possible. Scott’s friendship with Charles Kerr of Abbotrule likewise opened up the area, and many of those he visited under Shortreed’s auspices held tenancies from Henry Scott, 3rd Duke of Buccleuch (1746-1812). By the middle of the decade Scott’s eye was firmly trained on succeeding the ailing Andrew Plummer as Sheriff Depute of Selkirk, which, as discussed above, he did in 1799. Dedicated to the Duke of Buccleuch, who supported his successful petition, the Minstrelsy can be seen as a celebration of Scott’s appointment and an offering to his new patron. It can be no accident that the Minstrelsy’s opening ballad, “The Sang of the Outlaw Murray” (MSB 1) is one received from Plummer. It was no doubt Scott’s intention that the presentation of this ballad, in which the freebooter Murray is granted the sheriffdom of Ettrick Forest, should constitute a wry reflection of his own situation. Scott also quoted the ballad with reference to himself in a letter to Lady Abercorn in 1811, in which he wrote “like my predecessor in that office the Outlaw Murray renowned in ballad I am determined to be Sheriff of Ettricke forest / Surely while upward grows the tree.” (Scott to Lady Abercorn, 25 Feb. 1811; SL 2: 453). Scott’s mother, who was, as noted by her son in the previous chapter, a “great genealogist” had also
claimed that the Murrays were distant relations. Answering an enquiry about
the Murray family later in life, Scott recalled:

There is an ancient tradition describing them as spring[ing] from an outlawed Murray […] There is a song about this which I published many years since in a collection of such things called the Minstrelsy of the Scottish border. I have known the family for many years and my mother used to talk of some cousinship which that excellent lady carried to a distance unthought in these days. (Scott to Robert Siminton Wilson, 7 Dec. 1830; SL 11: 429.)

This self-referential aspect of the *Minstrelsy* is a subtle but pervasive feature of the collection; a further example occurs in a final footnote to the lengthy introduction preceding “The Souters of Selkirk”, where Scott acknowledges “[t]hat the editor succeeded Mr. Plummer in his office of Sheriff depute, and has himself the honour to be a souter of Selkirk, may perhaps form the best apology for the length of this dissertation.” (*MSB* 1802; 1: 248.)

Three *Minstrelsy* ballads are mentioned in Shortreed’s Account, in the following order: “The Fray of Suport” (*MSB* 15); “Dick o’ the Cow” (*MSB* 10) and “Jock o’ the Side” (*MSB* 11). These are all Border raid ballads and subsequently found their way into the historical section of the *Minstrelsy*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ballad Title</th>
<th>MSB no. &amp; page nos.</th>
<th>Shortreed’s Comments on Source</th>
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| The Fray of Suport  | 15 *MSB* 1802; 1: 184-193 | Dr John Elliot: had “an imperfect set” of the ballad (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 58)  
The only *Minstrelsy* ballad Scott took down from recitation in Liddesdale. It |
was performed by Jonathan Graham of Suport, “the lang quaker” (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 58)

Dick o’ the Cow | 10 | MSB 1802; 1: 137-153 | Music from “Uncle Thamas”, Thomas Elliot of Twislehope (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 59)

Jock o’ the Side | 11 | MSB 1802; 1: 154-163 | On staying with Walter Elliot at Whithaugh: “We had just gotten the Ballad and the air a bittie before” (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 61)

Table 1. Ballads Mentioned in Shortreed’s Account.

Although Scott never mentions his friend’s name as a source in the Minstrelsy, both Robert Shortreed and his wife Margaret had a knowledge of local songs and ballads, and it is likely that Shortreed made a significant impression upon the collection when it was at an early stage. Shortreed evidently had an ear for a tune, and in conversation with his son he recalls waking Scott up at Whithaugh Farm with a rendition of the ballad “Jock o’ the Side”:

He [Scott] sprang ou’r the bed and cam to the door saying such a wakening was worth the whole journey. He was very wild about Jock o’ the Side then. We had just gotten the Ballad and the air, a bittie before. (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 61.)

Shortreed was familiar with the folkloric memories which surrounded the ballads and knew them as songs rather than poems. In later years the Shortreed family were sought out by the collector Alexander Campbell, editor of the song collection Albyn’s Anthology (1816-1818). Campbell stayed with the Shortreed
family on his second visit to the Borders, which was probably made in 1811 (see MacAulay 2009: 117). In the anthology, he refers to Shortreed, his wife Margaret and their son Thomas as sources for four songs, three of which are included in the Minstrelsy: “The Twa Corbies” (MSB 68); “Jock o’ the Side” (MSB 11) and “Dick o’ the Cow” (MSB 10). A traditional tune, “Will Ye Be Kind Indeed” was taken down from the singing of Margaret Shortreed. In a footnote to this song, Campbell provides the following information concerning the Shortreed family:

The Editor, in his last excursion but one to the Border, was favoured with letters of introduction to several persons of condition in Tiviotdale and, among others, to the Sheriff-Depute, and to the Sheriff-Substitute of Roxburghshire. To the latter, and to his family, this volume of Albyn’s Anthology is highly indebted for several original Border melodies – one of which is the present, taken down correctly by the Editor from the singing of Mrs Shortreed (the lady of the gentleman last alluded to), who possesses more of the popular minstrelsy than any one else the Editor met with in his several excursions to that quarter in quest of materials for the present undertaking. (Campbell 1818; 2: 7.)

Thomas Shortreed provided Campbell with a version of “The Twa Corbies” that he had learned from his mother:

This Edition of the words, and Set of the Air of “The Twa Corbies” was taken down by the present Editor from the singing of Mr. Thomas Shortreed of Jedburgh, as sung and recited by his mother, the lady mentioned in a preceding page of this work. (Campbell 1818; 2: 27; original italics.)

60 The air was used for the newly composed song “I’ve Seen Midwinter’s Dreary Hours”, written by James Douglas of Cavers especially for inclusion in the collection. (See Campbell 1818; 2: 7.)
The ballad “Jock o’ the Side” was also sung by Thomas, who learnt it from his father Robert:

The melody, and particularly the words of this Liddesdale song, were taken down by the Editor from the singing and recitation of Mr. Thomas Shortreed, who learnt it from his father, and who possesses very many of the Border ballads, and popular songs of the Scottish Lowlands. (Campbell 1818; 2: 28.)

The ballad “Dick o’ the Cow”, however, appears to have been taken down from Robert Shortreed himself, as Campbell recorded:

This celebrated Border (or rather Liddesdale) Ballad, is here given, as taken down by the present Editor, from the singing and recitation of a Liddesdale man, namely, Robert Shortreed, Esq. Sheriff—substitute of Roxburghshire, in the autumn of 1816. (Campbell 1818; 2: 31.)

Although the time which elapsed between the publication of the Minstrelsy and Albyn’s Anthology means that it is unrealistic to draw too many conclusions about the songs Shortreed knew at the time of meeting Scott, and those with which he grew acquainted as a result of their friendship, Campbell’s notes in his own collection suggest that the Shortreed family held and maintained an active singing tradition. Describing a dinner at Abbotsford following the annual “Abbotsford Hunt” on 28 October 1820, Lockhart recalls a gathering at which Shortreed and his son Thomas were both invited to sing:

… every man was knocked down for the song that he sung best, or took most pleasure in singing. Sheriff-Substitute Shortreed (a cheerful hearty little man, with a sparkling eye and a most infectious laugh) gave us Dick o’ the Cow, or Now Liddesdale has ridden a Raid; his son Thomas (Sir Walter’s assiduous disciple and assistant in Border Heraldry and
Genealogy) shone without a rival in The Douglas Tragedy and The Twa Corbies… (Lockhart 1902: 6, 229).

While “Dick o’ the Cow” (MSB 10) may be linked with the Liddesdale raids, “The Douglas Tragedy” (MSB 69) and “The Twa Corbies” (MSB 68), as discussed below, were later additions to the Minstrelsy, and may also be linked with Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe of Hoddom Castle, Dumfriesshire (c. 1781-1851), who began a long-standing correspondence with Scott in August 1802 following the publication of the first edition of the Minstrelsy.
1. Twislehope Farm
2. Hermitage Castle
3. Millburnholm Farm
4. Shaws Farm
5. Newlands Farm
6. Cleuch-head Farm
7. Whithaugh Farm
8. Redheugh Farm

Hawick c. 17 miles
Carlisle c. 30 miles

The Liddesdale “Raids”

Shortreed’s account is valuable in assessing the cultural memories of the region with which Scott became acquainted in the decade leading up to the Minstrelsy’s publication. As a result of these expeditions, Scott became familiar with an assortment of local characters who were part of the network of family connections which Shortreed drew upon in guiding Scott around the area (see Map 1, above). He heard ballads and historical anecdotes and witnessed country manners, all of which made a deep impression upon him. Shortreed’s account also enhances our understanding of the cultural and social milieu in which Scott found himself on his first expeditions into the remote Liddesdale region in the presence of a local guide. Insights may be obtained into the practicalities of travelling in the region at the end of the 18th century, with details provided concerning the food and drink consumed by the pair: mutton, duck, porter and brandy are all mentioned. The practices of hospitality and accommodation also become clear: the men generally lodged with Shortreed’s acquaintances at their farms rather than inns, of which few existed, and Scott and Shortreed frequently had to share a bed at the farms they visited. Although the county’s inhospitable terrain and the rudimentary nature of its infrastructure probably made the expeditions more exciting for Scott as a visitor, they also hampered travel, as Scott wrote to Heber in 1800: “a jaunt into Liddesdale […] can only be undertaken in Summer on accot. of the Bogs.” (Scott to Heber, 5 Apr 1800; SL 12: 158.) The difficulties for farming and trade posed by the state of the roads in that remote region are made clear in the Reverend James Arkle’s entry for the statistical account of the parish of Castleton in 1793:
…in this very extensive country, not a yard of road had ever been attempted to be formed, till within these few years. [...] There is much intercourse with both Hawick and Langholm, by weekly markets, fairs, &c. and the difficulty of travelling to those places is inconceivable. Every article must be carried on horseback; and through these deep and broken bogs and mosses we must crawl to the great fatigue of ourselves, but the much greater injury of our horses, without the hope of a more comfortable mode of travelling. As we have hitherto had no roads, it is not to be expected that we should have had bridges… (Arkle, in Sinclair 1791-99; 16: 73-4. Original italics).

Although Shortreed refers to a later journey, probably in August 1800, being undertaken using Scott’s “auld low-wheeled phaeton,” transport was primarily on horseback, using native ponies which were suited to coping with the rough terrain borrowed from Charles Kerr of Abbotrule or Bob Leck, a horse couper in Jedburgh. In 1793 Scott wrote to Shortreed that he was “saving the fees, to buy a fringed Grey that I may be independent of Mr. Lecks charger” (Scott to Robert Shortreed, 18 Dec. 1793; SL 1: 29). Following his appointment as Sheriff Depute, Scott purchased a new horse in the spring of 1800 which he named Brown Adam, “a superb horse call’d in honor of the Ballad of that name” (Scott to Heber, 5 Apr. 1800; SL 12: 158).  

Most importantly as regards the making of the Minstrelsy, the account gives selective information which builds our understanding of how the ballads noted above were obtained. Key characters mentioned by Shortreed are William Elliot of Millburnholm (upon whom Scott would base the character of the farmer Dandie Dinmont in Guy Mannering), Walter Elliot, styled the “Laird of Whithaugh” Shortreed’s cousin, who scraped out tunes to the ballads on his three-stringed fiddle and with whom Scott and Shortreed often lodged for the

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61 A small open carriage. This may conceivably have been the same one as was procured for 62 horse couper: horse-dealer.
62 Scott’s source for “Brown Adam” (MSB 25) was Mrs Brown’s manuscript. This ballad would appear in the romantic ballad section in the first edition of the Minstrelsy (see MSB 1802; 2: 18).
night, Thomas Elliot of Twislehope or Shortreed’s “Uncle Thamas” who welcomed the visitors with whisky punch, and Dr John Elliot of Cleuchhead and later Newlands Farm.

Setting out on horseback from Abbotrule, the family home of Charles Kerr which lies around ten miles east of Hawick, Scott and Shortreed would have ridden some twenty miles south to their first destination of Millburnholm Farm on the Hermitage Water. Millburnholm was tenanted by William Elliot of Millburnholm, the husband of Elizabeth Laidlaw, who was one of Shortreed’s cousins.64

I had fixed that our headquarters should be at Cleugh-head or Whithaugh, and that he should dine the first day (in the inganging)65 at Millburnholm. Accordingly I wrote to Willie (Elliot) o’ Millburn – (his wife Betty was my cousin German) that Mr. Scott the Advocate and I, were coming to take potluck wi’ him on such a day. (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 57.)

Shortreed’s motivation in bringing Scott to visit William Elliot appears clear enough. As well as being a relation by marriage, Elliot was, at this time, a font of traditional lore and local knowledge of the area. He possessed, according to Shortreed, “a Vast o’ bits o’ Stories and tales o’ the tradition and manners o’ the Country that he telled, and really vera well” (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 58). Describing Walter Elliot of Whithaugh, however, Shortreed seems to be referring to Scott’s memories of the time as well as his own memory:

Whithaugh ye see wi’ a’ the plainness o’ manner imaginable, had a great deal o’ gentlemanly feeling about him, and was a man o’ great Common sense and information, and could crack about a great deal o’ things that Sir Walter likit weel to hear. We hae often sitten there till 2 or 3 in the

64 Elizabeth Laidlaw was the daughter of Shortreed’s paternal aunt Jane Shortreed and Robert Laidlaw of Falnash. See Shortreed family tree, NLS MS 8994, f.1.
65 inganging: beginning.
morning making fun and haverin’ and talkin’ nonsense and liltin’ and singin’ sungs at nae allowances, and Whithaugh himsel’ bumin’ away on an auld fiddle wi’ only three strings as Sir Walter says (and he’ll be right) atween ilka story he telled, till we war a’ fairly tired, and gaed to our beds – and the neist day again we were at it as hard as ever. There was ane o’ the times that we there, that our Cousin James Elliot o’ Woollee was wi us. (Shortreede, in Wilson 1932: 61.)

Here Shortough is evidently drawing not only on his own memory, but on the stories told by Scott himself about their exploits: the anecdote about Elliot of Whithaugh’s three-stringed fiddle, for example, was evidently one of Scott’s own tales. Answering a question from his son about the music of the ballads, Shortreede names Walter Elliot of Whithaugh and Thomas Elliot of Twislehope as having provided the tunes to “Jock o’ the Side” and “Dick o’ the Cow”. It would appear that he and Scott heard tunes for the songs during the Liddesdale expeditions, and on at least one occasion made a special journey to visit Thomas Elliot, the “Uncle Thamas” referred to above, in order to hear the tune to “Dick o’ the Cow” (MSB 10). There is no evidence of the tunes being written down, however:

I mind o’ our ridin’ away ae forenoon, maybe 6 or 7 mile to auld Thomas o’ Twizelhope’s who was a great hand for musick, for no other reason than to see gin I had the richt lilt o’ Dick o’ the Cow, for Whithaugh wasna vera sure about it. Sae away we gaed to uncle Thamas, as he was called, and after finding that I had the genuine lilt o’ the air, we had a gude snaiker o’ whisky punch wi’ him i’ the forenoon, out o’ a bit stroopit mug that he ca’ad Wisdom, and which he had for mair than 50 year. It made only twa or three spoonfuls o’ spirits, I forget which. He used to say that naebody could get drunk out o’ his wisdom, but he filled mae fouk fou wi’ it, than ony other body i’ the hail parish, for a’ that. Oh aye! that was the kind o’ spree that we thocht naethin o’. I mind that day

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66 haverin’: chattering.
67 at nae allowances: without holding back.
68 ilka: each.
69 neist: next.
70 snaiker: a punch or whisky bowl.
71 stroopit mug: a mug with a spout for pouring.
we visited Penton Linns\textsuperscript{72} (we dined that day at Frank Scoons o’ the Whitlayside) we had devilled ducks and London Porter at Cleugh-head at 6 i’ the morning, before we set out to Whithaugh to breakfast. (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 59.)

This was evidently another tale which Scott himself enjoyed telling, as J. E. Shortreed comments “I have heard Sir Walter talk o’ that” (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 59).

Shortreed’s account is most detailed concerning the circumstances under which Scott heard the ballad “The Fray of Suport” (MSB 15), which recounts, from the English perspective, the rallying of the “hot trod” or call to arms in the aftermath of a Scottish raid on the area of Solport, Cumbria. According to Shortreed, this ballad was the only one which Scott took down from recitation during the Liddesdale expeditions. He heard the ballad at Dr Elliot’s farm at Newlands from “auld Jonathan Graham, the lang quaker as he was called” (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 58). Shortreed then goes on to describe the encounter with Graham:

He spoke, or rather skraughed,\textsuperscript{73} in a loud stentorian voice, which formed the oddest contrast imaginable wi’ his worn and emaciated figure. He had been a great repository o’ Ballads and traditions in his day, but his memory and other faculties war nearly gane by the time we saw him. He could eat little or nane poor creature, but he drank weel, and the Doctor and Sir Wr. filled him exceedingly fou o’ brandy – oh he was ill! Faith I thocht he would die i’ our hands ance a’gether, for he fainted clean away – but we got him carried out into the fresh air, and threw water on his auld wizened face, and rubbit him, and wrought on till he came about again, and nae sooner was he better than he set to roaring the outlandish lilt again. (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 59.)

\textsuperscript{72} Penton Linns is a waterfall near Canonbie, S.E. Dumfriesshire, directly on the Scottish / English Border.

\textsuperscript{73} skraughed: shrieked or screeched.
The following day, Graham was sent on his way “after getting a gratuity from Sir Walter” (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 59); from this information, combined with Shortreed’s assertion that Graham was sent for with a man and a horse (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 58), we gain a clear insight into the hierarchical terms under which Graham had been called to Newlands. Apart from being an anecdote in which Scott’s over-generous hand with the brandy bottle resulted in the near death of one of the tradition bearers they had come to Elliot’s farm at Newlands expressly to hear, this description of Graham has strong echoes of Scott’s own description in the introduction to the ballad in the *Minstrelsy*, where the ballad is described as being “chaunted in a sort of wild recitative” (*MSB* 1802; 1: 184) by Graham, who was still alive in 1802.74

This person is perhaps the last of our professed ballad reciters, and is now upwards of eighty years of age. He was by profession an itinerant cleaner of clocks and watches; but a stentorian voice, and a most tenacious memory, qualified him eminently for remembering accurately, and reciting with energy, the border gathering songs and tales of war. His memory is now much impaired by age; yet the number of verses which he can still pour forth, and the animation of his tone and gestures, form a most extraordinary contrast to his extreme feebleness of person, and dotage of mind.” (*MSB* 1802; 1: ci.)

Comparing the two descriptions, it appears that, consciously or otherwise, the *Minstrelsy’s* description of Graham’s “stentorian voice” had crept into Robert Shortreed’s memory or his son’s description of the “lang quaker” in the memoir, another reminder that the *Minstrelsy* itself was a significant point of reference and a powerful memorial text. As in the case of Whithaugh’s fiddle and Thomas Elliot’s tankard, above, this was evidently a tale which was told a great deal,

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74 A note in the second edition of 1803 recorded his death having occurred between the publication of the first and second edition (see *MSB* 1803; 1: cxxii).
probably particularly when Scott and Shortreed met, as Lockhart recalls hearing the tales from Shortreed, above.

Given the information provided by both Shortreed and Scott concerning Graham’s nickname and his profession, it has been possible to identify him as Jonathan Graham of the Nook, who is described in John B. Penfold’s extensive survey of clock-makers in Cumberland (1977). The Nook is a remote part of the Nichol Forest in Cumberland, about half a mile from the Border. Penfold refers to the following anecdote from the autobiography of the engraver Thomas Bewick (1753-1828). In the summer of 1776, in a watchmaker’s shop in Carlisle, Bewick met

[a] man – a kind of scamp – of the name of Graham, who asked me what road I was going? “To Scotland,” I replied. “So am I,” said he, “and, if you can keep foot with me, I will be glad of your company.” We had no sooner set off, than I found he was a vapouring fop who was very vain of his great prowess as a pedestrian. I could see that he wanted to walk me off my foot; but, having been long practised in that way, he found himself mistaken, and long before we reached Longtown, he had called in at several public houses for refreshment and invited me to do the same. I, however, was not thirsty, and not being used to drink, I sat on the seats at the doors until he came out. He kept on in this way till we reached Langholm, when he surveyed me with an attentive eye, but said nothing. (Bewick 1862: 83.)

Penfold’s notes on Graham also provide evidence for his nickname of the “lang quaker”, as well as his fondness for spirits:

Jonathan Graham, apparently a Quaker as many of the Grahams were, had fallen foul of them. At the Friends Monthly Meeting held on May 21st, 1756, at Carlisle was passed the following minute: “At this meeting a Denial (presumably a form of rejection) was given forth against Jonathan Graham of Nook for Drinking to excess and fornication, etc. the same to be read in the particular meeting of Solport” […] However on July 12th 1760 Jonathan Graham of the Nook, Kirkandrews-on-Esk, bachelor, clockmaker and yeoman, took out a marriage licence to marry
Margaret Irwing of the neighbouring farm of Nookfoot… (Penfold 1977: 203).

Penfold’s research also suggests that by 1781 Graham had moved to Langholm, where he fathered an illegitimate child. This is evidenced by the following entry in the Kirkandrews parish register, which records: “1781 Feb. 3rd Isabella illegitimate daughter of Jonathan Graham of Longholm (Langholm) North Britain, Clockmaker and Mary Forster of Grain in the parish of Canonby baptised” (Penfold 1977: 203). According to Penfold’s research, it is striking how many clock-makers and menders plied their trade within the remote villages of Cumberland. It was an uncertain way of life, and it is likely that many ended their days in the workhouse. If Jonathan Graham had indeed walked to Newlands from Langholm, where he was residing at that time, this would agree with Shortreed’s statement that Graham had travelled “15 mile o’ gate” on the main road north to Newlands after Scott and Shortreed had sent a man and a horse to collect him (see Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 59).

Dr John Elliot of Cleuch-head and Caw’s Poetical Museum

Scott first heard “The Fray of Suport” at Newlands Farm, where Dr John Elliot of Cleuch-head was residing at this time. A close friend of the Shortreed family (Shortreed’s own son John Elliot Shortreed was named after him), Elliot features heavily in Shortreed’s account. It would appear that as well as showing the pair hospitality, Elliot also shared his collection of Liddesdale ballads with Scott:

75 o’ gate: by the road.
76 In the following discussion, the modern spelling of Cleuch-head will be used apart from in the case of direct quotations.
Dr Elliot of Cleugh-head had a great turn for that kind o’ lore himself, and had collected a vast deal o’ the old Ballads o’ the Country for his own amusement, and when Sir Walter came in quest o’ that kind o’ thing, he got all that the Doctor had collected, and seeing his great fondness for them, the Doctor was induced to exert himself in gathering a great many more. I think with the exception o’ the Fray o’ Suport (and he had an imperfect set of it too) and a very few that had been printed before in the Hawick Museum they war all gotten in MS. from Dr Elliot. (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 58.)

Shortreed’s account connects Elliot with all three of the ballads that come up in conversation with his son: “Dick o’ the Cow” (MSB 10), “Jock o’ the Side” (MSB 11), and “The Fray of Suport” (MSB 15). He was a surgeon and tenant farmer, the second son of Robert Elliot of Redheugh.⁷⁷ According to records held in the Buccleuch papers, Robert Elliot extended his tenancies to farms at Cleuch-head, Shaws, Foulshiels, the Scottish side of Kershope, Middle Moss, Coumes, part of Tarras Moss and Redheugh.⁷⁸ A family dispute led to Robert Elliot cutting his first son William out of his inheritance. On Robert Elliot’s death, his entire estate was therefore settled upon his second son John, with the exception of the stock of a farm at Kershope and the life rent of the house at Redheugh, both of which went to Thomas, the youngest son (see NRS GD224/552/3, f. 8).

Although frequently termed “John Elliot of Redheugh” by Scott and others, John Elliot held the tenancy of Cleuch-head farm from around the 1770s until the 1790s, when his place of residence became Newlands farm. It was at the farm of Cleuch-head,⁷⁹ today located off the modern B6357 some eight miles south-east of Hawick, that Elliot provided accommodation for Scott and Shortreed on their first foray into Liddesdale in 1792. Taylor and Skinner’s 1775 map of the road

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⁷⁷ Variously spelled Redheugh, Redhaugh, Reidhaugh. In the following discussion I will use the modern spelling of ‘Redheugh’ apart from when direct quotes differ in their spelling of the name.
⁷⁸ See Buccleuch family papers, NRS GD224/552/3/8 and GD224/258, ff. 6-42.
⁷⁹ Not to be confused with ‘Cleuch Head’ situated approximately one mile south east of Hobkirk.
from Edinburgh to Carlisle (Map 2) positions “Dr Elliot’s” in the correct position for modern-day Cleuch-head. The map is by modern standards upside-down, with north downwards:

Map 2. "The Road from Edinburgh to Carlisle, continued." Detail from Taylor and Skinner's Survey 16th Dec. 1775. Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland. (EMS.b.3.48.)

Although further references to John Elliot in official records are scarce, he appears to have contributed to the statistical account of his local parish of Castleton, mentioned above. A “Mr. Elliot of Redheugh”, probably Elliot’s
father Robert, is noted to have walked fifty miles to market and back at the age of eighty-six (Arkle, in Sinclair 1791-99: 16: 60). Elliot himself related an anecdote to Arkle in which he used his medical knowledge to treat a lamb which a shepherd had watched being snatched by an eagle and had rescued (Arkle, in Sinclair 1791-99: 16: 77). It was also Elliot who had gifted Scott an ancient war-horn, which was said to have been found at Hermitage Castle (see Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 60), and oversaw the clearing of the ground that allowed Scott and Shortreed to excavate the dungeon at Hermitage Castle in the early 1790s, as discussed below. The statistical account of Castleton also contains two references to Walter Elliot of Whithaugh, whose plantations and woods are mentioned as well as his involvement in the building of a road along the banks of the Liddel, which had been previously inaccessible.

A horse-tax register for Castleton Parish, September 1797 (Fig. 1), which records the duty liable to be paid for farm horses used in husbandry or trade, lists “John Elliot, Cleugheads” as well as his brother Thomas Elliot who, as noted above, had life-rent of Redheugh. This document provides a bird’s eye view of members of the parish, and contains the names of several of the characters visited by Shortreed and Scott as noted above: Walter Elliot, Whithaugh; Thomas Elliot, Fewzlehope (a variant spelling of ‘Twislehope’) and William Elliot of Millburnholm.
The monumental inscription on the family tombstone in Castleton Cemetery,
where the Elliots of Redheugh are buried, records the following information:

Margaret Beattie, spouse to Robert Elliot who died 15th March, 1767 aged 55. Thomas Elliot their youngest son who died at Redheugh 22nd May, 1800 aged 55. Also John Elliot of Redheugh, second son to above Robert Elliot who died at Newlands, 12th March, 1809 aged 68.

From this information we can date John Elliot’s birth to around 1740-1741, although records of his birth or baptism do not seem to have survived. According to Robson, Elliot’s father Robert, for whom Redheugh was built during the 1730s, held the lease of the farm of Cleuch-head from 1728, having married Margaret Beattie, the daughter of the previous tenant, Thomas Beattie. Soon after this he extended his tenancy to the farms of Shaws and Newlands (see Robson 1974: 4). The close connection between John Elliot and the Shortreed family is very clear; in his will, Dr John Elliot attempted to bestow the lease of Newlands Farm upon Robert Shortreed’s second son James Shortreed. However, his bequest was not fulfilled, possibly due to objections from Mary Elliot, John Elliot’s sister in law, and the Duke of Buccleuch repossessed Newlands in order to use it as a hunting estate.

As well as “The Fray of Suport”, “Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead” (MSB 7) is another ballad which we can connect with Elliot through Scott’s correspondence. Scott mentions Elliot several times in the collected correspondence between 1793-1796, starting with a letter to Shortreed on 18

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80 Recorded on a visit to the cemetery, April 2014.
81 Attempts to discover a record of Elliot’s birth or baptism in the parish registers have so far drawn a blank. In the Statistical Account of Castleton the Rev. Arkle notes that “with regard to marriages and baptisms, the parish register is very imperfect. Several books have been lost, which make blanks of considerable periods” (Arkle, in Sinclair 1791-99; 16: 68).
82 See Robson 1974: 4, also NLS MS 8995 f.1 (Robert Elliot’s account book).
83 See letter from Shortreed to Scott, 26 Dec 1820; NLS MS 867, f. 128r; letter from Shortreed to Scott, undated, and note in Andrew Shortreed’s hand, NLS MS 856, f.17. The exchange of letters on John Elliot’s death is given in Appendix 2.
December 1793. Here Scott sends payment for the excavation work outlined below, stating “I expect to hear from the Dr. on the subject of our old Ballads, particularly “Jemmy Tellferr [sic] which is a great favourite of mine” (Scott to Shortreed, 18 Dec. 1793; SL 1: 29). Scott’s spelling is always erratic, but his spelling of “Jamie Telfer” in this instance may well be a reflection of Elliot’s accent and pronunciation of the name. The second letter in which Scott mentions Elliot was written the following year to Charles Kerr of Abbotrule, when Scott asked his friend somewhat proprietarily to “refresh Dr. Elliot’s memory with regard to my Old Songs” (Scott to Charles Kerr, 30 June 1794; SL 1: 33). In a further letter to Shortreed in October 1796, where Scott instructed his friend thus: “Present the Ballads to Doctor Elliot, with best compliments to him and all our friends on the Liddle and at Falnash.”84 (Scott to Shortreed, 16 Oct. 1796; SL 1: 59.) These “ballads” may have been draft copies of the Bürger translations, “William and Helen” and “The Chase”, although this cannot be stated with certainty as they did not appear in print until 1 November 1796 (see Todd and Bowden 1998: 9). Scott certainly dispersed these “ballads” after their publication, writing to William Taylor on 25 November, “…do me the favour of accepting a copy of two Ballads, translated from Burger” (Scott to William Taylor, 25 Nov. 1796; SL 1: 59).

In the Minstrelsy, Scott acknowledges Dr John Elliot in connection with “Dick o’ the Cow” (MSB 10), “Jock o’ the Side” (MSB 11) and “Hobbie Noble” (MSB 12), alongside the printed collection The Poetical Museum, containing

84 This reference is to the Laidlaw family of Falnash: Robert Laidlaw, a farmer who married Jessie Scott of Skelfhill. Shortreed notes that Scott was “particularly smitten” with Jessie Scott in the early days of the ‘Liddesdale Raids’ (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 60).
songs and poems on almost every subject, mostly from periodical publications,

printed in Hawick by George Caw in 1784:⁸⁵

This ballad, and the two which immediately follow it in the collection, were published, in 1784, in the Hawick Museum, a provincial miscellany, to which they were communicated by John Elliot, Esq. of Reidhaugh,⁸⁶ a gentleman well skilled in the antiquities of the western border, and to whose friendly assistance the editor is indebted for many valuable communications. (MSB 1802; 1: 137.)

Scott almost certainly became familiar with Caw’s collection through his friendship with Shortreed and Elliot. Although Scott only mentions Caw’s Poetical Museum in connection with the ballads “Dick o’ the Cow”, “Jock o’ the Side” and “Hobbie Noble”, Caw’s introduction to “Dick o’ the Cow” refers to “an original M.S for which, with several others, the Compiler acknowledges himself indebted to a Gentleman of taste, in Liddesdale” (Caw 1784: 22). In light of the evidence above, it is likely that this gentleman was John Elliot. The list of subscribers in this collection contains “Mr John Elliot, surgeon, Cleugh-head”, his brother “Thomas Elliot, Reidhaugh” and “Thomas Elliot, Twislehope” mentioned above (see Caw 1784: 388).

Although Elliot appears to have been the source for the Poetical Museum ballads, and Shortreed refers to Elliot being in possession of a manuscript, no ballad manuscripts given to Scott by Elliot have as yet been discovered or


⁸⁶ The Redheugh/Cleuch-head anomaly has previously caused scholars a certain amount of confusion, in particular Dobie (1940: 168) who mistakenly asserts that Scott must have assimilated two John ElliOS, and Harry (1975: 123) who repeats Dobie’s error. In referring to “John Elliot of Reidhaugh”, however, Scott was emphasising the Elliot family’s ‘seat’ Redheugh, which is still in the possession of the Elliot family today, rather than the tenancies he held at Cleuch-head and later Newlands farm.
identified, so that we cannot state with certainty that Scott received help in this form from Elliot, as Shortreed states above. Should Scott have indeed received a ballad manuscript from Elliot, it seems surprising that he should not have referred directly to this in the *Minstrelsy*, as it could have been claimed as a unique and valuable asset to a collection which prided itself on its use of primary sources. Whether or not such a manuscript existed, a comparison of the *Minstrelsy* versions of “Dick o’ the Cow”, “Jock o’ the Side” and “Hobbie Noble” to those in Caw’s *Poetical Museum* shows that barring slight adjustments in spelling and syntax, the versions are very similar. It would appear that Scott also drew upon the Caw’s accompanying notes to these ballads (see Fig. 2). A notable difference between the *Poetical Museum* and the *Minstrelsy*, however, is the *Minstrelsy’s* omission of the vocable refrains in each ballad which are included in Caw’s *Poetical Museum* and impart a sense of the ballads’ performance as songs rather than poetry: “fala fala, fala, faliddle” in “Dick o’ the Cow” (Caw 1784: 22-35), “with my fa ding diddle, la la dow diddle” in “Jock o the Side” (Caw 1784: 145-152) and “fala la diddle” in “Hobbie Noble” (Caw 1784: 193-200).
Figure 2. Extracts from “Dick o’ the Cow”. Left to right: Caw’s Poetical Museum (Caw 1784: 25) and the Minstrelsy (1802; 1: 152) showing the notes concerning Pudding-burn.

There is, however, some suggestion of this additional oral/aural context in the case of the Minstrelsy version of “Dick o’ the Cow”, as Scott notes in the introduction:

This ballad is very popular in Liddesdale, and the reciter always adds at the conclusion, that poor Dickie’s cautious removal to Burgh under Stanemore, did not save him from the clutches of the ARMSTRONGS; for that, having fallen into their power several years after this exploit, he was put to an inhumane death. (MSB 1802; 1: 138.)
The same ballad’s endnote in Caw’s *Poetical Museum* states that “The Armstrongs at length for Dick o’ the Cow in his clutches, and, out of revenge, they tore his flesh from his bones with red-hot pincers” (Caw 1784: 35).

In summary, it is highly likely that Scott encountered a range of ballads in Liddesdale, not least from John Elliot as well as Walter Elliot of Whithaugh and Thomas Elliot of Twislehope. Caw’s *Poetical Museum* was an important printed source for the *Minstrelsy*, and it is likely that it was the Liddesdale expeditions that brought the collection to Scott’s attention: the subscribers’ list is mainly restricted to the areas surrounding Hawick and Jedburgh. We have seen how two of the three *Minstrelsy* ballads mentioned by Shortreed in the account are directly connected to Caw’s collection: “Dick o’ the Cow” and “Jock o’ the Side”. Whether he passed on ballads to Scott by word of mouth or in print, Elliot was an important contact in the early days of the *Minstrelsy*’s conception and evidently had some reputation in the community as a bearer of local knowledge. Elliot was also involved in helping Scott to excavate the foundations of Hermitage Castle, an important site of memory that came to symbolise the “Liddesdale Raids” for Scott.

**Hermitage Castle, “famous in Border history & tradition”**

Scott’s involvement with Hermitage Castle began during his journeys in Liddesdale with Shortreed during the 1790s, when he not only sketched the castle (see Fig. 3, below) but also excavated its foundations with the help of Robert Shortreed and Dr Elliot. Late in the year of 1793, Scott wrote to Shortreed about the planned excavations at both the castle and the nearby grave of a 13th century warrior styled “The Cout of Keeldar”: 
I trouble you with the enclosed £1,1.- for carrying on our joint operations at Hermitage Castle which I suppose our freind [sic] Dr. Elliot[4] will think of commencing about this time. I shall expect to hear from you if they prove successful [sic]. Let the Cott of Keelder by no means be forgotten. I think it probable his grave may produce something. It will be proper to go as deep as the Till or we may lose our labour. (Scott to Robert Shortreed, 18 Dec. 1793; SL 1: 29.)

A year or so later, the excavations of the castle itself began in earnest. Scott was now also in pursuit of the remains of weaponry belonging to the Sheriff Sir John Ramsay, who was starved to death in the castle’s dungeon by Sir William Douglas in 1342 (see Brown 2005: 42). Having received permission from the Duke of Buccleuch to break open the dungeon at Hermitage, Scott was hopeful of recovering some remains of the incident. A team of men with pickaxes were instructed to lay the foundations of the castle bare, but to leave the last piece of the wall in place so it could be done in the presence of Scott himself. Shortreed gave his son an account of the episode, which probably occurred in the spring or summer of 1794:

Sir Walter had gotten leave frae Lord Dalkeith87 to examine the Dungeon that the Flower o’ Chivalry cast Ramsay the Sheriff o’ Tiviotdale into […] a’ was made ready for us to the breaking doun o’ a thin bit o the wa’, which was left o’ purpose that it might be done in Sir Walter’s own presence. We took some of the men doun wi’ us again, and the moment the bit wa’ was knockit in, Sir Walter wi’ the greatest eagerness jumped into the Dungeon. He first threw out some handfuls o’ chaff, then he found what we considered to be the bones of the unfortunate sheriff, but they a’ mouller’t away as soon as ever they got the air – and at last he cam on the bit o’ his horse’s bridle. They had probably thrust down his horse’s trappings alang wi’ him… (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 60).

87 A subsidiary title of the Duke of Buccleuch.
Hermitage Castle, then, came to occupy a key role as a site of memory in Scott’s imagination from an early stage. Hermitage is the subject of the only illustration that made its way into the 1802 edition of the *Minstrelsy*, an engraving drawn by landscape artist Hugh William Williams and engraved by William Walker (Fig. 3). The image was based on a sketch which Scott made while standing knee-deep in snow during one of his visits described both by Shortreed (see Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 59) and by Scott in his journal:

Going down to Liddesdale once, I drew the castle of Hermitage in my fashion, and sketchd it so accurately that with a few verbal instructions Clerk put it into regular form. Williams (the Grecian) copied over Clerk's and his drawing was engraved as the frontispiece of the 1st Edition [sic] of the Kelso Edtn. *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. *(WS Journal, 1 Mar. 1826; in Anderson 1998: 118.)*

![Figure 3. Hermitage Castle, Frontispiece for the Minstrelsy (1802 edition.)](image)

Including this image, Scott acknowledged the site’s embodiment of Borders memory, but also a personal memento of the Liddesdale Raids. Indeed,

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88 Scott’s close friend William Clerk (1771-1847).
89 Hugh William Williams (1773-1829).
the castle formed the backdrop to Henry Raeburn’s first portrait of Scott, (Fig. 4) which was painted in the spring of 1808 for Scott’s publisher Archibald Constable (see Russell 1987: 73). In this picture Scott sits on an unidentified ruin, “under the fragment of an old tower” (Scott to John Christian Schetky, 14 Aug, 1808; in Russell 1987: 73) with Camp his bull terrier in the foreground to the right. Originally, Raeburn’s portrait contained another dog, but this was removed in order to make way for the hills of Liddesdale and Hermitage castle which may be seen in the background (see Russell 1987: 73). Following Scott’s quarrel with Constable in late 1808 and his subsequent break with the publisher in 1809 (see Sutherland 1995: 135-7), Scott requested to keep Raeburn’s painting, asking that it should be “considerd as done at my debit & for myself.” (Scott to Constable, 22 Jan. 1809; SL 2: 155.) However, Constable refused and held onto the portrait, considering it to be his own private property (see footnote, SL 2: 155). In 1809 Scott therefore commissioned another portrait from Raeburn to be painted in a similar style (see Russell 1987: 74). In the second painting (Fig. 5), the background was changed: instead of Liddesdale and Hermitage castle, Raeburn depicted the Yarrow Valley, a more personal choice which reflected Scott’s residence at Ashiestiel. Percy, one of Scott’s greyhounds, was also included in this portrait, as originally planned for the 1808 study.

In depicting the more gentle Yarrow Valley rather than the wilds of Liddesdale, Raeburn’s second portrait reflected a more domestic view suitable to be hung in the poet’s home. If Hermitage Castle reflected the roots of inspiration Scott drew on in his work, the second portrait’s background reflected a landscape where Scott had made a home from the fruits of such labour. Despite the alterations Raeburn made to Scott’s face in the second portrait, addressing the
somewhat impassive expression of the first, it must be noted that Scott was not altogether happy with either of Raeburn’s efforts, feeling that he looked “chowderheaded” in both portraits (Scott to Charles Montagu-Scott, 15 Apr. 1819, SL 5: 349).

Figure 4. Walter Scott, by Henry Raeburn, 1808. Hermitage Castle and the hills of Liddesdale can be viewed in the background. Used with permission from Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections and Edinburgh University Museum Collections.

90 A review of the portrait in the Repository of Arts (1810) complained that “never was a more unpoetical physiognomy delineated on canvas.” (Russell 1987: 73.)
91 chowderheaded: stupid
Conclusions: Shortreed’s Account

Unfortunately, many of the letters Scott and Shortreed exchanged during the 1790s appear to have been lost. Writing Lockhart in 1836, Shortreed’s son Andrew recounts how “at a general clearing out of old papers many years ago, files of Sir Walter’s letters had been carelessly thrown into the condemned basket” (letter from A. Shortreed to Lockhart, 10 Apr. 1836; MS 856, f. 8r). In the absence of such sources, Shortreed’s account is all the more valuable,
although the context of his recollections and the time elapsed must be taken into account. Although the systematic collection of ballads was not the main purpose of the Liddesdale expeditions of the 1790s, Shortreed and his social network were crucial to the formation of the *Minstrelsy*. As Shortreed himself was aware, the Liddesdale expeditions imbued Scott with a strong sense of place and history, as well as of the characters and manners of the people of the Border region:

We rade about visiting the scenes o’ remarkable occurrences, and roved away amang the foulk hail days at a time, for Sir Walter was very fond o’ mixing wi’ them, and by that means he became perfectly familiar wi’ their character and the manners o’ the country. (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 59.)

Nine years Scott’s senior, Robert Shortreed predeceased Scott, dying suddenly at home on 7 July 1829 at the age of sixty-seven. He was buried in Jedburgh Abbey, where his gravestone still stands today (Fig. 6).
The inscription reads: “In Memory of Robert Shortreed Sheriff substitute of Roxburghshire friend from youth to age, guide and companion of Sir Walter Scott Died in Jedburgh, 7 July 1828 aged 67. Margaret Fair, his spouse died at Langlee April 1843 aged 62. Thomas, their eldest son, Procurator fiscal of Roxburghshire Died at Camberwell 26 Aug 1826, aged 32. John Elliot, their third son, Bank manager Wexford died at Edinburgh 4 Nov. 1836, aged 37. William, their fifth son, Captain HEICS died at Alnwick 14 May 1845 aged 42.”

Scott recorded the event in his journal entry of 9 July 1829. His comments on his friend’s death hark back to the ballad-hunting expeditions of their youth and to Shortreed’s talent for singing, as he acknowledged his debt to his friend:

Heard of the death of poor Bob Shortreed, the companion of many a long ride among the hills in quest of old ballads. He was a merry companion, a
good singer and mimic, and full of Scottish drollery. In his company, and under his guidance, I was able to see much of rural society in the mountains which I could not otherwise have attained, and which I have made my use of. He was, in addition, a man of worth and character. I always burdened his hospitality while at Jedburgh on the Circuit, and have been useful to some of his family. […] So glide our friends from us - Haec poena diu viventibus. Many recollections die with him… (Scott, in Anderson 1998: 655-656).

As Scott observed, the death of his friend also symbolised the passing of the memories that Shortreed held, memories of the two men’s youth as well as the local knowledge which he had been able to draw on in showing Scott around the Borders. Family connections permeated the landscape to which Shortreed introduced Scott. His account may be seen to be concerned both with preserving the Shortreed family’s connection with Scott, and passing the knowledge on to the next generation in the manner of the oral tradition itself.

No more Liddesdale ‘raids’ took place following the publication of the *Minstrelsy*, when Scott became acquainted with William Laidlaw. Continuing his search for ballads as the century turned, Scott would turn his gaze north from Roxburgh to Selkirkshire, where a further trove of traditional material awaited him.

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92 “This is the punishment of living a long time.”
Chapter 5

The Recollections of William Laidlaw and James Hogg

Introduction

William Laidlaw was baptised on 28 November 1779, the eldest of three sons born to James Laidlaw, tenant in Blackhouse farm, Yarrow, and his wife Catherine (Kitty) Ballantyne.\(^{93}\) He was educated at Peebles Grammar School before joining his father in working the farm. The Laidlaw family evidently prized self-education and had a particular enthusiasm for literature, which sparked Laidlaw’s early interest in poetry. In this he found a kindred spirit in James Hogg, who came to Blackhouse to work as herdsman from 1790 until 1800, and was welcomed into the heart of the family.\(^{94}\)

As well as collecting material for Scott whilst preparation for the second edition of the *Minstrelsy* was underway in 1802, Laidlaw enabled Scott to increase his familiarity with the Yarrow Valley and its inhabitants. While Robert Shortreed was nine years older than Scott, Laidlaw was nine years younger. When Scott and Leyden first visited Blackhouse Farm in the spring of 1802, Laidlaw would have been twenty-two years old. The following year, Laidlaw left Blackhouse and took up the tenancy of a farm at Liberton Tower close to Edinburgh. In 1810 he married his cousin Janet Ballantyne of Whitehope Farm, which is situated about five miles east of Blackhouse, and they went on to have

\(^{93}\) Biographical information for Laidlaw has been drawn from Bayne & Hughes, *ODNB* entry for William Laidlaw (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15881. 8/3/14) and the Laidlaw family papers held in the National Library of Scotland (Acc 9084-9089).

\(^{94}\) Laidlaw’s uncle, Mr Walter Bryden of Crosslee, initially came to the aid of Hogg’s family in 1776 when they faced destitution following the failure of Robert Hogg’s farming business. (See Hogg, in Mack 1972: 4-5.)
four daughters.\textsuperscript{95} Around the same time as his marriage, Laidlaw’s two brothers George and James moved north to the farm of Knockfin, thirty miles south west of Inverness, where they began to farm sheep. While it was noted in the previous chapter that Robert Shortreed’s sons sought employment overseas, the Laidlaw brothers’ move north was not atypical during this period either. The clearing of the Highland population from large tracts of land and raising sheep in their place had been underway since the middle of the 18th century, but following Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster’s introduction of the Cheviot sheep into his estate of Langwell in Caithness in 1792,\textsuperscript{96} farming for wool and meat had become more profitable than ever before.\textsuperscript{97} Mounting population pressures in their native region, combined with their considerable knowledge and experience of sheep husbandry in demand further north, resulted in many Borderers finding employment as tenant farmers or land factors in the Highlands of Scotland. George and James Laidlaw never married and remained in Inverness-shire for the rest of their lives.

During the second decade of the 19th century, Laidlaw struggled to make a living at Liberton Tower Farm. Tough market conditions caused by falling grain prices following the advent of peace between Britain and France in 1814 were exacerbated by the cold temperatures and heavy rains of 1816, which all but destroyed the crop in some areas and led to the year being remembered by various names such as “The Poverty Year”, “The Year Without a Summer” and “Eighteen-Hundred-and-Froze-to-Death” (see Klingaman and Klingaman 2013). If it had not been for his friendship with Scott, Laidlaw would probably have

\textsuperscript{95} Laidlaw family papers, National Library of Scotland, Acc 9084/9.  
\textsuperscript{96} The year of 1792 subsequently became known as \textit{Bliadhna nan Caorach} / the Year of the Sheep.  
\textsuperscript{97} The Cheviot sheep had been bred in the Borders. James Robson of Belford Farm (d. 1798), situated around fifteen miles east of Jedburgh is credited with initiating the selective breeding process that resulted in this large, hardy breed. See Tancred 1899: 366-7.
followed in his brothers’ footsteps while still a relatively young man. As it was, Scott was to able to employ Laidlaw as Abbotsford’s steward between 1817-1826, during which time he and his family occupied the neighbouring farm of Kaeside. During periods of Scott’s ill-health in the years 1818-1820, Laidlaw also acted as his employer’s amanuensis.\textsuperscript{98} When the extent of Scott’s financial troubles became clear following the crash of 1825, he was obliged to end Laidlaw’s employment, whereupon Laidlaw and his family left Kaeside in 1827, much to Scott’s regret, and took up residence at Whitehope in Yarrow, Janet’s family home (see \textit{SL} 10: 504, 507). However, the move was not permanent and following the death of Scott’s gamekeeper and factotum Thomas Purdie in 1829, Scott, by then in gravely failing health, was able to request Laidlaw to return to his service, which he did in February 1830 (see \textit{SL} 11: 299). From this time until Scott’s death, Laidlaw and his family resided at Kaeside with Laidlaw resuming his duties as Scott’s steward and amanuensis. It was not until after Scott’s death in 1832 that Laidlaw finally followed his brothers in moving north, where he became factor first to Mrs Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth in Ross-shire, and then to Sir Charles Lockhart Ross of Balnagowan. Laidlaw died at his brother James’s house at Contin by Dingwall on 18 May 1845 aged sixty-five, and is buried in Contin churchyard alongside his wife Janet (Fig. 7).

\textsuperscript{98} Scott apparently dictated the end of \textit{The Bride of Lammermoor} (1819) to Laidlaw, most of \textit{A Legend of Montrose} (1819) and part of \textit{Ivanhoe} (1820). See Bayne & Hughes, \textit{ODNB} entry for William Laidlaw. http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15881. 8/3/14.
Figure 7. William Laidlaw’s gravestone, Contin Churchyard, Ross-shire, Sept. 2011 (photograph: L. MacRae). The inscription reads: “Here lie the remains of William Laidlaw born at Blackhouse in Yarrow November 1780⁹⁹ died at Contin May 18th 1845 and his wife Janet Ballantyne who died at Contin 15th July 1861. The above William Laidlaw was amanuensis to Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford 1811-1832.”

Laidlaw’s *Recollections of Sir Walter Scott*

Unlike Shortreed’s dialogue, Laidlaw’s “Recollections of Sir Walter Scott, 1802-1804” take the more conventional form of a memoir. Two manuscripts in Laidlaw’s own hand have survived. Both are undated, but as Laidlaw refers to

⁹⁹ This birth date is incorrect, as Laidlaw’s baptism record attests to his having been baptised in 1779 (See Old Parish Register for Yarrow, accessed via http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk. 28/6/14.)
events of 1802 as “nearly fifty years since” (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 69) it is likely that the *Recollections* were written after Scott’s death, probably during the late 1830s or early 1840s. There are two extant manuscript versions. A manuscript copy held in the National Library of Scotland (Dep. 253/16) appears to be a draft copy of the one held in Edinburgh University Library as part of the Laing collection (Laing II 281/2). The latter text has also been transcribed by James Sinton and published in the *Transactions of the Hawick Archaeological Society* (1905: 66-74). On comparison with the Laing MS, Sinton’s transcription is highly accurate, and it is to this publication I will refer in the following discussion unless stated otherwise.

Despite Laidlaw’s long involvement with Scott as friend, correspondent and employee, Laidlaw’s *Recollections* cover only the initial period of his acquaintance with Scott and focus upon the pair’s four initial meetings. In contrast to Shortreed’s conversations with his son, which reflect the meandering nature of orally communicated memories, Laidlaw’s *Recollections* are arranged in chronological order. They begin with his first memories of seeing Scott at a meeting of the Selkirk Yeomanry in late December 1799 or early 1800, where Scott was in attendance in his new role as Sheriff Depute, and finish somewhat abruptly with a visit Laidlaw himself made to Scott at Lasswade in August 1803.

Laidlaw began actively collecting ballads for Scott in 1802, and his substantial influence marked a new phase of ballad collection which occurred between the publication of the first and second editions of the *Minstrelsy*, in which Laidlaw (and to a lesser extent James Hogg) would play key roles following Leyden’s departure from Scotland in December 1802. In fact, writing to Scott in September 1802, Laidlaw cast aspersions on Scott’s Liddesdale
sources, particularly regarding the material associated with Dr John Elliot: “[i]t seems the Liddesdale people say you got your information there from Dr Elliot – & they persist in saying his knowledge is very shallow. But if you have seen Mr. Beattie Muckledale\textsuperscript{100} it answers this objection.” (Laidlaw to Scott, Sept. 1802; MS 3874 ff. 182v-183r.) For his part, however, Scott refused to be drawn on this issue, attributing such views to local bias:

As to the Liddesdale traditions I think I am pretty correct although doubtless much more may be recovered. The truth is that in these matters as you must have observed old people are usually very positive about their own mode of telling a story and equally uncharitably critical in their observations on those who differ from them. (Scott to Laidlaw, Sept. 1802. \textit{SL} 1: 173.)

Such concerns about authenticity are given a further twist when we consider that Scott used verses from Thomas Beattie’s version of the ballad “Tamlane”, despite suspecting that someone, whether Beattie or “a poetical clergyman or schoolmaster” had given “a coat of modern varnish to this old ballad” (Scott to Laidlaw, 21 Jan. 1803; \textit{SL} 1: 171). In a telling aside, however, Scott asked Laidlaw not to tell anyone about these misgivings, so as not to jeopardise his chances of getting further information: “I am curious to see his other traditionary treasures so pray hint to no one my doubts of their authenticity” (Scott to Laidlaw, 21 Jan. 1803; \textit{SL} 1: 171). This is an excellent example of the subjective and diplomatic editing decisions which Scott made during the compilation of the \textit{Minstrelsy} and point to his frequently relaxed attitude to ballads which had been sensitively ‘polished’, an aspect to which we shall return below in the case of Hogg and “Auld Maitland” (\textit{MSB} 53).

\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Beattie of Meikledale}: Thomas Beattie (1736-1826), owner of a farm at Hartsgarth, Newcastleton. Beattie provided Scott with some supplementary stanzas for \textit{The Young Tamlane} (\textit{MSB} 1802; 2: 228-243).
Few dates are recorded in the *Recollections*, but Laidlaw provides a good deal of descriptive detail about the places to which he and Scott travelled (see Map 3), including the supposed settings for many of the ballads he obtained for Scott. Extant correspondence between Scott and Laidlaw, in which the two men discuss collecting ballads, also allows Scott’s visits to Ettrick to be charted in a more detailed fashion.

Scott’s first four visits to Laidlaw were part of extended trips to Selkirkshire made by Scott in fulfilment of his legal duties as Sheriff Depute. The first may be dated to April or early May 1802, when Scott, in the company of Leyden, called on Laidlaw at Blackhouse Farm, Yarrow (see Laidlaw, in Sinton 1902: 67; Dobie 1940: 79). Although this meeting marked the beginning of the long friendship between Laidlaw and Scott, it was the only time that Laidlaw and Leyden met. As Scott reported to Ellis following his first visit:

Leyden & I have just concluded an excursion of a week or two thro’ my jurisdiction of Selkirkshire where in defiance of mountains, rivers & peat-Bogs Damp & Dry, we have penetrated the very recesses of Ettricke fforest to which district if I have ever the happiness of welcoming you, you will be convinced that I am truly the Sheriff of the Cairn & the Scaur… (Scott to Ellis, 10 May 1802; SL 12: 217-218).

Scott’s second visit probably occurred in late August or early September of the same year (see SL 1: 157). It was on this occasion that he and Laidlaw visited Walter and George Bryden, Laidlaw’s cousins at Ramsaycleuch, where they were joined for the evening by James Hogg, who had recently returned from the Highlands and had already met Scott twice during that summer.101 The evening

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101 The date of Scott and Hogg’s first meeting is unclear. Although Hogg states in his autobiographical article “Reminiscences of Former Days” that he first met Scott in the summer 1801 at Ettrick House, along with his mother and William Laidlaw (Hogg 1829: 51), there are
at Ramsaycleuch was followed by a visit to Hogg’s parents the next day. From Scott’s correspondence with Archibald Constable we know that Scott was in Selkirkshire again from 26 September to 13 October (see SL 1: 159), during which time he probably made the third visit to Blackhouse, when Scott, Laidlaw and Hogg rode down to Moffat and viewed the waterfall known as the Grey Mare’s Tail, in the company of the artist James Skene of Rubislaw. A combination of thick fog and boggy ground seems to have made for a memorable excursion, as James Skene recorded in his own memoirs, quoted by Lockhart:

One of our earliest expeditions was to visit the wild scenery of the mountainous tract above Moffat, including the cascade of the ‘Grey Mare’s Tail’, and the dark tarn called ‘Loch Skene.” In our ascent to the lake we got completely bewildered in the thick fog which generally envelopes the rugged features of that lonely region; and as we were groping through the maze of bogs, the ground gave way, and down went horse and horsemen pell-mell into a slough of peaty mud and black water, out of which, entangled as we were with our plaids and floundering nags, it was no easy manner to get extricated… (Skene, in Lockhart 1902; 2: 232).

Skene’s picaresque tone may be seen to mirror Scott’s own vivid description of the journey, in which he recounts his experiences in questing for ballads:

I had the merit of making a grand tour in quest of old Ballads in the course of which besides the risque of swamping in bogs & breaking my neck over scours I encountered the formidable hardships of sleeping upon peat-stacks & eating mutton slain by no common butcher but deprived of life by the Judgement of God as a Coroners inquest would express themselves. I have however not only escaped safe, per varios casus per tot discrimina rerum, but have also returnd loaded with the treasures of substantial indications that this event occurred later, as discussed above. Piecing together the evidence, Richard D. Jackson has suggested that the date of this particular meeting is more likely to have been early September 1802 at Ramsaycleuch, but that it was not the first time the two men had met. Their first brief meeting must have occurred prior to June 1802, when Hogg refers in a letter to having “seen and conversed with” with Scott (Hogg to Scott, 30 Jun. 1802; in Hughes 2004; 1: 15). The two men also met in early July 1802 in Edinburgh before Hogg departed for the Highlands, but their meeting concerned Hogg’s farming ambitions, rather than ballads (see Jackson 2006: 5-18).

102 “Through various hazards and events.” The quote is from The Aeneid, book 1, line 284. (Dryden’s translation; see Keener 1997: 11.)
oral tradition. (Scott to Ellis, 17 Oct. 1802; SL 12: 220.)

The final meeting documented by Laidlaw in his *Recollections* took place at Lasswade in August 1803, where Scott showed his friend around Rosslyn Castle and Chapel (see Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 72).

Laidlaw’s introduction to Scott was facilitated through Andrew Mercer (1755-1842), who was a native of Selkirk. At the turn of the century, Mercer was attempting to establish himself as a painter of miniatures and a man of letters in Edinburgh when he was introduced to Scott by Leyden. Mercer lost no time in applying himself to the task of collecting ballads for Scott. A letter to Robert Anderson in 1801, for example, finds him reporting on his limited success in obtaining lore concerning “the death of the outlaw Murray” (NLS Adv. MS 22.4.11, f. 52r). In the spring of 1802, Mercer enlisted Laidlaw’s help, apparently supplying him with a list of the ballads that Scott was anxious to acquire.

Having received Mercer’s request, Laidlaw’s search for ballads began. Notably, his initial sources were women; as he recalled in his *Recollections*, “I began to enquire, and write down from the repeating of old women, and the singing of the servant girls, everything I could hear of” (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 66). He was frustrated, however, by the impression that printed collections such as Allan Ramsay’s *Tea-Table Miscellany* had become entwined in the memories of his informants, and felt that he was catching the tail end of a tradition that had been more vigorous in the previous generation:

I […] was constantly aroused to vexation at two circumstances, namely, finding how much the constant false taste of Allan Ramsay constantly annoyed me instead of what I wanted, and had superseded the many striking and beautiful old songs and ballads of all kinds that I got traces and remnants of; and again, in discovering how much Mr. Scott had been
too late – from the accounts I received of many men and women who had been the bards and depositories of the preceding generation. (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 66.)

Laidlaw’s perspective as a collector is of interest in that he evidently had a firm idea of exactly what sort of material he was looking for, and was irritated by the sense that the oral tradition was being forgotten due to the influx of printed sources. By contrast, there is Laidlaw’s particular excitement on hearing a part of the ballad “Auld Maitland” (MSB 53) which will be discussed below. His perspective, outlined above, may be seen to adhere to opinions surrounding the decay and forgetfulness that, as noted earlier, have been identified by Constantine and Porter to be characteristic of song collecting across the decades. In *Fragments and Meaning in Traditional Song*, Constantine and Porter interrogate the concept of song “fragments”, but note that “where songs genuinely do appear fragmented or broken, it is often because a radical shift in context has torn them out of the traditional environment…” (Constantine and Porter 2003: 4). In the case above, Laidlaw is clear that this “radical shift” has been brought about by the intervention of print culture, whose productions sound contrived to Laidlaw’s ear. However, Laidlaw does not of course record whether or not the songs were perceived as complete by those who sung them, an important distinction which Constantine and Porter, drawing on the work of John Miles Foley, have made in that a “fragment” of a song may in fact signify a “web of shared allusion” far greater than the sum of its parts (see Constantine and Porter 2003: 4).

Laidlaw was, however, an extremely prolific collector of traditional material, and in conjunction with James Hogg, he provided Scott with a substantial amount of material which found its way into the second edition of the
Minstrelsye, as well as other versions of ballads already included in the first edition which Scott consequently adjusted with reference to his new information. Scott used many of the ballad versions collected by Laidlaw to replace existing ballads in the 1802 editions, such as “The Laird of Laminton” (MSB 18), in which a bride is ‘rescued’ by her former lover on the day of her wedding, and “The Laird of Ochiltrie” (MSB 19), which recounts the tale of a successful plot to free the young laird after he is taken prisoner by the king. From his perusal of the Herd MS, from which he drew the 1802 version of “The Laird of Laminton”, Scott was aware of the existence of other versions of the ballad under the name “Katharine Janfarie” (see MSB 1802; 1: 216). In the second edition of 1803, Scott gave the name as “Katharine Janfarie” in place of “The Laird of Laminton, commenting that the ballad “is now given in a more perfect state, from several recited copies.” (MSB 1803; 1: 238.) Scott assembled the new version by drawing on the two versions collected by Laidlaw. One version came from Mr. Bartram of Biggar (NLS MS 877, f. 12r), Laidlaw’s “crackbrain’d acquaintance” of whom little else is known, while the other was taken down from Jean (or Jane) Scott (MS 877, ff. 84-85r), who was probably a servant of the Laidlaw family and lived at Ormiston near Innerleithen (see Laidlaw to Scott, MS 893, f. 15r). As Harry has identified, Scott retained twelve verses from the 1802 version of “The Laird of Laminton”, but re-edited the 1803 version in light of his new information, using the opening three verses of Jane Scott’s version, and substituting the unsuccessful suitor’s name for “Lochinvar”, as he was named in Bartram’s version (Harry 1975: 77-8). Two localising details were also added. Lochinvar’s retinue were clad in “the Johnstone Gray”, which, as Scott

103 Letter from Laidlaw to Scott, MS 3874, f. 182r.
explained in a footnote, was “the livery of the ancient clan of Johnstone” \cite{MSB 1803; 1: 241}, and these men are seen off by “four and twenty Leader lads”, supporters of the Lord of Lauderdale, the successful suitor \cite{MSB 1803; 1: 241}.

Laidlaw collected three versions of “The Laird of Logie” \cite{MSB 19}, which Scott used to replace “The Laird of Ochiltrie” from the 1802 edition. Charles Zug has analysed Scott’s handling of these ballad versions and comments on Scott’s use of oral tradition in order to verify historical fact, together with his manipulation of sources to match the historical source with the ballad tale \cite{Zug 1978: 232-233}. In the introduction to “The Laird of Ochiltrie”, Scott discussed how the ballad “may teach us to afford some degree of credit to poetical tradition, even when we cannot immediately ascertain its foundation in historical fact” \cite{MSB 1802; 1: 220}. As Zug notes, Scott identified the ballad tale with a historical event noted in Spottiswoode’s *History of the Church and State of Scotland* (1677) which concerned the capture and escape of “John Weymis, younger of Bogie” \cite{MSB 1802; 1: 221}. However, he acknowledged in the notes: “[h]ow the title of the hero came to be changed from *Bogie* to *Ochiltrie* does not now appear.” \cite{MSB 1802; 1: 221}. With the versions Laidlaw supplied him with, however, Scott could now align the ballad more closely to Spottiswoode. Acknowledging Laidlaw’s collecting efforts, \cite{MSB 1803; 1: 241} Scott wrote to him:

The Laird of Logie is particularly acceptable as coming very near the real history. Carmichael mentioned in the Ballad was the ancestor of the Earl of Hyndford & Captain of James VIths [sic] guard so that the circumstance of the prisoner being in his custody is highly probable. I

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\footnote{See NLS MS 877, ff. 12r-13v; 23; f. 75r; f. 253r.}

\footnote{Two other versions Of “The Laird of Logie” are included in MS 877. In one the source is unacknowledged, (MS 877 f. 75r ) while Laidlaw’s handwriting on the other informs us that the song was “sung by Lady A Lindsey The Winsome Laird of Young Logie” (MS 877, f. 253r).}
will adopt the whole of this Ballad instead of the common one called Ochiltree. (Scott to Laidlaw, 11 Sep. 1802; NLS MS 877, f. 121.)

Scott’s quest for historical information concerning this ballad continued, and in 1806 he was able to add a reference to *The Historie of King James Sext* which finally gave him the name “Weymis of Logie” (*MSB* 1806; 2: 341-2). In light of this, it may seem surprising that in 1806 both “The Laird of Laminton” and “The Laird of Logie” were moved from the historical to the romantic ballad section. However, this was part of a more general restructuring which saw most of the ballads not directly concerned with border reiving history consigned to the romantic section.

Informants named in letters from Laidlaw to Scott lend some of the most detailed insights into the men and women from whom Laidlaw collected ballads. Jane Scott, who was mentioned above, evidently came close to being one of the “depositories” of tradition Laidlaw refers to above. As well as “Katherine Janfarie”, Laidlaw took down her versions of “Fair Marjorie” which Scott used as a source for the *Minstrelsy* ballad “Young Benjie” (*MSB* 70). A version of “The Broom of Cowdenknowes” (*MSB* 75) was also collected from Jane Scott, as well as other ballads not included in the *Minstrelsy*: “The Cruel Brother” (Child 11; MS 877, f. 62r), “Fair Janet” (Child 64; MS 877, f. 82-83) and “Fair Annie An’ Sweet Willie”, (Child 73; MS 877, ff. 71r-74r). The ballads Jane Scott gave to Laidlaw frequently came framed with their own memories, as noted by the latter regarding the “The Broom of Cowdenknowes”:

I copied the Ballad of Coldiknows from the recitation of Jane Scott who now resides at Ormiston near Innerleithen but there are almost none in

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106 Also *SL* 1: 172.
this Country unacquainted with it I have often heard it sung Myself the last line of the stanza with the corresponding part of the air were always sung twice over with little or no variation and this had undoubtedly been the original manner of singing it – Jane Scott told me that long ago the Ewe milkers were accustomed to sing it in concert in coming home from the Bought\textsuperscript{107} at night… (Laidlaw to Scott, 1802; MS 893 f. 15r-15v).

Another indirect source of ballads was Alex Laidlaw, herdsman at Bowerhope, one of the other farms held by Laidlaw’s father James on the east side of St Mary’s Loch. Alex Laidlaw took down a version of “Sir Patrick Spens” (MSB 55) from Marion Brown of Helmsburn, Ettrick, “an old crazy woman who […] has allowance from the parish and is permitted to go about where she pleases.” (Laidlaw to Scott, MS 893 f. 15r.) In the Minstrelsy, Scott collated this version of this ballad with one he recalled “was picked up by Leyden with some other little things from a woman in Kelso.” (Scott to Laing, SL 1: 293.) Laidlaw also refers to singers amongst the travelling communities of Scotland:

If you have any acquaintainces [struck out: at] in Annandale near Lochmaben you might procure a compleat copy of Graeme and Bewick. There is an old Tinker there called John Kennedy from whom I have made several attempts to get it but without success as he never travells now he has another called the Gallant Graems [sic] quite different from the one you published; and relating to the transportation of the Border Graemes. (Laidlaw to Scott, 1802; MS 893 ff. 15r-15v.)

Laidlaw’s collecting activities enabled Scott to gather many versions of ballads which had a substantial influence on the contents of the second edition of the Minstrelsy. The Recollections do not dwell on Laidlaw’s collecting activities, however, but describe the journeys he and Scott undertook in search of specific sites related to the ballads.

\textsuperscript{107} \textit{Bought}: sheep-fold.
1. Blackhouse Farm
2. Glebe and Warrior’s Rest stones
3. Whitehope Farm
4. Craig Douglas Farm
5. Dryhope Tower
6. Cockburn’s Tomb, Henderland
7. Ramsaycleuch Farm
8. Ettrick House Farm
9. The Grey Mare’s Tail (waterfall)
10. Helmburn
11. Bowhill (residence of Duke of Buccleuch)

Sites of Memory

As Zug has shown, Scott’s promotion of the ballads as historical sources is generally manifested in two ways in his editing of the Minstrelsy: the inclusion of ballads which made up in historical accuracy what they lacked in poetical merit, and the selection and collation of ballad versions in order to best reflect their historic context (see Zug 1978: 229-230). Scott’s increasing familiarity with the cultural memories held by natives of Selkirkshire, where he had a network of collaborators to provide him with local lore and show him around the area, forms an additional layer to this process. An examination of Laidlaw’s memories alongside the representations of these sites in the Minstrelsy allows for comparisons to be drawn between the existing cultural memories of the area to which Scott gained access through Laidlaw and the recreation of these sites of memory within the Minstrelsy. In the following examples, Scott’s adopted role as antiquarian intermediary between past and present is clearly shown. Memorial stones play a key role in this regard: from the seven stones mentioned in connection with the ruined Blackhouse Tower and “The Douglas Tragedy” (MSB 69), an ancient inscribed stone and “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow” (MSB 56), and finally to the gravestone and waterfall which became associated with the events described in “The Lament of the Border Widow” (MSB 57). The three examples outlined below provide insights into the processes of memory-making which Scott employed in editing the Minstrelsy ballads, and which were directly inspired by his visits to Blackhouse and his friendship with William Laidlaw.
**Blackhouse Tower and “The Douglas Tragedy”**

“The Douglas Tragedy”, which is a version of the ballad “Earl Brand” (Child 7), is an abduction ballad, where two eloping lovers are pursued by the girl’s father and a band of men and a fierce fight ensues. In most versions, the suitor sees off his assailants and tries to conceal the severity of his wounds, but dies during or at the end of the journey. NLS MS 877 contains a chapbook version of the ballad owned by Scott entitled “Lord Douglas’s Tragedy”, and two other versions: one entitled “Earl o’ Bran” in the hand of Richard Heber (MS 877, ff. 63r-64r), who wrote down Leyden’s version, and the other, “Earl Brand”, written out by Laidlaw (MS 877, f. 66). These two versions were not used in the *Minstrelsy*, but the following brief discussion will show the major discrepancy between these versions and the *Minstrelsy* which in turn sheds some light on Scott’s selective editing. National tensions are evident in the version taken down by Heber, in which the Queen of England’s daughter falls in love with the Earl o’ Bran at the English court and persuades him to elope, with fatal consequences:

Did ye ever hear o’ guid Earl o’ Bran,  
an’ the Queen’s daughter o’ the south lan’.

She was na fifteen years o’ age,  
till she came to the Earls bed Side.

O good Earl o’ Bran I fain wad See  
my grey hound run over the lea.

O Kind Lady I have no Steed but one  
but ye shall ride, an’ I shall run.  
(MS 877, f. 63r.)

The pair ride away but are betrayed by an old man styled “Carl Hood”, who alerts the English court. A pursuit ensues and the Earl o’ Bran refuses the
princess’s suggestion that they swap clothes so that she can fight. In the fray that follows, the Earl o’ Bran defeats his pursuers before being fatally wounded by the devious old man who stabs him in the back. He tells the princess that the blood from his wounds is only the glistening of his scarlet hood on the river water, the wordplay in evidence between “Carl Hood” and “scarlet hood” providing evidence of the oral transmission of the ballad. The pair manage to reach the Earl o’ Bran’s house in Scotland where his mother laments the manner of her son’s death: “O Son ye’ve gotten ye’re dead wie an Eng. Wh-re” (MS 877, f. 64r). In reply the Earl o’ Bran defends the princess and asks his mother to marry her to his brother: “she was never a wh-re to me / Sae let my brother her husband be” (MS 877, f. 64r). Apparently this version had a refrain between each line of this ballad, but Heber chose not to include this, as he noted, “I have not written the Chorus, but Mr Leyden having it by him knows how to give it” (MS 877, f. 64r). Laidlaw’s version makes no reference to an English / Scottish theme, but the refrain contains a possible reference to Airlie, in Angus:

Earl Bran’s a wooing gane  
ae lalie o lilly lalie  
He woo’d a lady an was bringin her hame  
O the gae knights o Airly  
(MS 877, f. 66r)

In this version too the woman requests to swap clothes with her lover in order to fight:

O yonder is My father’s Men  
Take my Cleadin an I’ll take thine  
O that was Never law in land  
For a Ladie to fecht an a knight to stand  
(MS 877, f. 66v)
As we have seen earlier in the case of Caw’s Poetical Museum in Chapter Four, Scott tended to remove refrains and choruses from the Minstrelsy ballads, with some notable exceptions such as “The Fray of Suport” (MSB 15) and “The Cruel Sister” (MSB 40). Neither Heber nor Laidlaw’s versions of “Earl Brand” specify any particular locality in the Border region, and it was probably the reference to the Douglasses that initially excited Scott’s interest in “Lord Douglas’s Tragedy”, the chapbook copy still preserved in MS 877 (f. 4). For the Minstrelsy, Scott combined this copy with a version he had been sent by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, as will be discussed below. In “Lord Douglas’s Tragedy”, the lovers are Lord William and Lady Margaret. There is no element of betrayal or the swapping of gender roles, and William stops fighting at Margaret’s request as she cannot bear to see her father killed. The chapbook version does not specify any locality apart from the generic St Mary’s Kirk as a burial place in the penultimate verse:

Lord William was buried in St Mary’s Kirk
the other in St Mary’s Quire;
Out of William’s grave sprung a red rose,
and out of Margaret’s a brier
(MS 877, f. 4).

Although he did not use Laidlaw’s collected version of the ballad, Scott’s visit to the farm at Blackhouse was instrumental in his interpretation and location of “The Douglas Tragedy” in the Minstrelsy. The ruin of Blackhouse Tower was the first site of interest which Scott and Leyden encountered on their arrival at

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108 “The Fray of Suport” has the refrain “Fy Lads! Shout a’ a’ a’ a’ / My gear’s a’ gane.” (See MSB 1802: 1: 186.) Bronson suggests the “Binnorie” refrain in “The Cruel Sister” (See MSB 1802: 2, 143-150) was popularized by the Minstrelsy version (Bronson 1969: 44).

109 St Mary’s Kirk, in Hawick, is the burial place of Sir Walter Scott, styled “Bauld Buccleuch” (1565-1611). Always keen to venerate the ancestors of his patron the Duke of Buccleuch, this connection, however obscure, may have proved a further attraction to Scott.
Blackhouse Farm, as the tower stands close to the farmhouse (see Figs. 8 & 9, below). According to Laidlaw’s *Recollections*, Scott asked Laidlaw about the tower soon after his arrival. Laidlaw replied that local tradition connected the ruin to the Douglas family, and apparently cited David Hume’s *History of the House and Race of Douglas and Angus* (1644) as a historical source:

I told the sheriff that the traditional account said it once in old times belonged to the Black Douglas, from which was derived the name of the place ‘Blackhouse’ & that the neighbouring farm which stretched for two miles to the Yarrow was called Craig of Douglas, and that in Hume’s ‘History of the House of Douglas and Angus,’ it was narrated that a Sir John Douglas of Douglas Burn sat in Malcolm Canmore’s first Parliament of Scone (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 67).

Although Laidlaw may have inserted this reference for the benefit of the readers of his *Recollections*, this could also be an indication that he too had taken an interest in the tower and encouraged the connection which Scott would make between the ballad and the Laidlaw family farm.

In August 1802, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe opened what was to be a long-term correspondence with Scott as a direct response to the first edition of the *Minstrelsy*, and enclosed copies of “The Douglas Tragedy” and “The Twa Corbies” (MSB 68) in his first letter. Reading the collection, Sharpe wrote to Scott, had struck a chord in his own memory, and he, like Laidlaw, remembered women as the chief bearers of this tradition:

From my Infancy I have been fond of old ballads, and have sat for days listening to the spinster and the knitters in the sun singing many of the songs published in your collection. Of course I learnt to repeat a great number, and still retain in my memory a few entire, with an immense hoard of scraps. “The Douglas Tragedy” was taught me by a nursery-maid… (Sharpe to Scott, 5 Aug. 1802, in Allardyce 1888; 1: 135).
In his reply, Scott wrote that he was delighted to adopt Sharpe’s version in place of his chapbook version: “the Douglas Tragedy […] is doubly acceptable to me, as I had been long desirous of obtaining a good set.” (Scott to Sharpe, 13 Aug. 1802; SL 1: 153.) Scott aligned his new correspondent’s version with its Blackhouse setting and provided Sharpe with a plethora of local information. He was evidently about to pay Laidlaw another visit:

Popular tradition has pointed out the scene of this fatal story and assignd it to Blackhouse in Selkirkshire where there are ruins of a very ancient castle said to have belonged to a Lord William Douglas who sat in a parliament of Malcolm Canmore. The scenery around it is savage and desolate: a stream called the Douglas-Burn is said to have been that where the lovers stopd to drink, and seven huge stones are averrd to have been erected in memory of the seven brothers: the Douglas-craig is in the immediate vicinity, and takes its name from the same family. All these circumstances seem to argue that the uniform tradition of the country people has some foundation in fact. I am just going to that part of the country, and shall carry the Douglas Tragedy along with me. (Scott to Sharpe, 13 Aug. 1802; SL 1: 153.)

For his part, Sharpe raised no objection to Scott’s location of the ballad, writing in reply to Scott’s letter that “I am much oblige d to you for the information you give me with respect to the ‘Douglas Tragedy’, which I had always regarded as a fiction borrowed from the ‘Child of Elle.’” (Sharpe to Scott, 27 Aug 1802, Allardyce 1888; 1: 138-9.) Scott’s letter to Sharpe would be echoed when Scott introduced the ballad in the Minstrelsy, which places Blackhouse farm at the centre of the scene:

The ballad of ‘The Douglas Tragedy’ is one of the few to which popular tradition has ascribed complete locality. The farm of Blackhouse, in Selkirkshire, is said to have been the scene of this melancholy event […]

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110 “The Child of Elle” was included in Percy’s Reliques in 1765. Percy acknowledged he had reworked the ballad from “a fragment in the Editor’s folio MS” (Percy 1776; 1: 90).
From this ancient tower, lady Margaret is said to have been carried by her lover. Seven large stones, erected upon the neighbouring heights of Blackhouse, are shown, as marking the spot where the seven brethren were slain, and the Douglas burn is averred to have been the stream, at which the lovers stopped to drink: so minute is tradition in ascertaining the scene of a tragical tale, which, considering the rude state of former times, had probably foundation in some real events (MSB 1803; 3: 244).

Towards the end of the ballad’s introduction, Scott took the local connection even further, connecting “St Marie’s Kirk” with St Mary’s Loch in the Yarrow valley:

The three last verses are given from the printed copy, and from tradition. The hackneyed verse of the rose and the briar springing from the grave of the lovers, is common to most tragic ballads, but it is introduced into this with singular propriety, as the chapel of St Mary, whose vestiges may be still traced upon the lake, to which it has given name, is said to have been the burial place of lord William and fair Margaret. (MSB 1803; 3: 244-245.)

While we cannot be certain that Scott did not receive the information above from Laidlaw, it is more likely that upon receiving a hint of the Douglas connection, Scott’s own imagination worked its powers upon the topography presented to him at Blackhouse. Framed by the Minstrelsy’s commentary, the transformation was complete, and Scott had deftly turned the “minute” tradition to fit his chosen version of the ballad. Unfortunately, the original version sent to Scott by Sharpe has not survived. As Sharpe was clearly taking an active interest in the development of the Minstrelsy it may seem surprising that Scott would have published a markedly different version while citing Sharpe as the source. Nevertheless, it may be seen from the following comparison of the chapbook copy of “Lord Douglas’s Tragedy” and the Minstrelsy version that the two are remarkably similar: with the omission of some repetitive phrases, the Minstrelsy
version follows the same verse and narrative pattern while the text is in many cases only lightly re-worked.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Lord Douglas’s Tragedy”</th>
<th>“The Douglas Tragedy”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MS 877, ff. 9r-10v</strong></td>
<td><strong>MSB 1803; 3: 246-250</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rise up, rise up, Lord Douglas, she says,</td>
<td>“Rise up, rise up, now, lord Douglas,”</td>
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<tr>
<td>and draw to your arms so bright,</td>
<td>she says,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Let it never be said a daughter of yours,</td>
<td>“And put on your armour so bright,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shall go with a Lord or a Knight.</td>
<td>Let it never be said, that a daughter of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thine</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was married to a lord under night.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rise up, rise up, my seven bold sons,</td>
<td>“Rise up, rise up, my seven bold sons,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and draw to your arms so bright,</td>
<td>And put on your armour so bright,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let it never be said a sister of yours</td>
<td>And take better care of your youngest</td>
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<tr>
<td>shall go with a Lord or a Knight.</td>
<td>sister,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>For your eldest’s awa the last night.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>[see verse 9 below]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He looked over his left shoulder, to see what</td>
<td>He’s mounted her on a milk white steed,</td>
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<tr>
<td>he could see,</td>
<td>And himself on a dapple grey,</td>
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<tr>
<td>And there he spy’d her seven brethren</td>
<td>With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bold, and her father who lov’d her tenderly.</td>
<td>And lightly they rode away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light down, light down Lady Marg’ret he said,</td>
<td>Lord William lookit o’er his left shoulder,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and hold my steed in thy hand,</td>
<td>To see what he could see,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That I may go fight with your brethren</td>
<td>And there he spy’d her seven brethren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bold, and your father who’s just now at hand.</td>
<td>Come riding over the lee.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Light down, light down, lady Marg’ret,” he</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>said,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“And hold my steed in your hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Until that against your seven brethren</td>
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<td></td>
<td>bold,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>And your father, I mak a stand.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>O there she stood, and better she stood,</td>
<td>She held his steed in her milk-white hand.</td>
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<tr>
<td>and never did shed a tear</td>
<td>And never shed one tear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Till once that she saw her seven brethren</td>
<td>Until that she saw her seven brethren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slain, and her father she lov’d so dear.</td>
<td>fa’,</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>And her father hard fighting, who lov’d her</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>so dear.</td>
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</table>

176
Hold your hand, hold your hand, William, she said for thy strokes are wondrous sore; For sweethearts I may get many a one, but a father I ne’er will get more.

She took out a handkerchief of holland so fine, and wip’d her father’s bloody wounds, Which ran more clear than the red wine; and fork’d in the cold ground.

O chuse you, chuse you, Lady Marg’ret he said; whether you will go or bide? I must go with you, Lord William, she said, since you’ve left me no other guide.

He lifted her on a milk white steed, and himself on a dapple grey, With a blue gilded horn hanging down by his side, and slowly they both rode away.

Away they rode, and better they rode, till they came to yonder sand; Till once they came to yon clear river side, and there they lighted down.

They lighted down to take a drink of the spring that ran so clear; And there she spy’d his pretty heart’s blood, a running down the stream.

Hold up, hold up, Lord William, she says, for I fear that you are slain: ’Tis nothing but the shade of my scarlet clothes that is sparkling down the stream.

He lifted her on a milk-white steed, and himself on a dapple grey,
With a blue gilded horn hanging down by his side, 
and slowly they both rode away.

Ay they rode, and better they rode, 
till they came to his mother’s bower; 
Till once they came to his mother’s bower, 
and down they lighted there.

O mother! mother, make my bed, 
and make it soft and fine, 
And lay my lady close at my back, 
that I may sleep most sound.

Lord William he dy’d ere middle of the night, 
Lady Marg’ret long ere day; 
Lord William he died for pure true love, 
and Lady Marg’ret for sorrow.

Lord William was buried in St Mary’s Kirk, 
the other in St Mary’s Quire; 
Out of William’s grave sprung a red rose, 
and out of Margaret’s a brier.

And ay they grew, and ay they threw, 
as they wad fain be near; 
And by this ye may ken right weil, 
they were twa lovers dear.

door, 
And there they lighted down.

“Get up, get up, lady mother,” he says, 
“Get up, and let me in! – 
Get up, get up, lady mother,” he says, 
“For this night my fair lady I’ve win.

“O mak my bed, lady mother,” he says, 
“O mak it braid and deep! 
And lay lady Marg’ret close at my back, 
And the sounder I will sleep.”

Lord William was dead lang ere midnight, 
Lady Marg’ret lang ere day – 
And all true lovers that go thegither. 
May they have mair luck than they!

Lord William was buried in St Marie's kirk, 
Lady Margaret in Mary’s quire. 
Out o’ the lady’s grave grew a bonny red rose, 
And out o’ the knight’s a briar.

And they twa met, and they twa plat, 
And fain they wud be near; 
And a’ the warld might ken right weil, 
They were twa lovers dear.

But bye and rade the Black Douglas, 
And wow but he was rough! 
For he pull’d up the bonny brier, 
And flang’d in St Mary’s loch.

Table 2. Comparisons of “Lord Douglas’s Tragedy” (MS 877) and the Minstrelsy version of “The Douglas Tragedy” (MSB 1803; 3: 243-250).

If Sharpe was surprised that the ballad he had sent to Scott appeared in the Minstrelsy in an entirely different form, he raised no objection. In fact, Sharpe was evidently willing to bow to Scott’s authority regarding such matters, as he wrote to Scott referring to his own poem “The Lord Herries his Complaint” (MSB 78) which Scott would include in the imitation ballad section of 1803,
“your corrections are perfectly just, and I beg that you may make what others seem good unto you without ceremony…” (Sharpe to Scott, 12 Oct 1802, in Allardyce 1888; 1: 143).

The origin of the final verse in the *Minstrelsy* version which concerns the Black Douglas flinging the briar in St Mary’s Loch is almost certainly a collation of Scott’s making. As may be seen above, it was not part of “Lord Douglas’s Tragedy”, and neither would it appear to have been included in Sharpe’s version, as Scott compares the *Minstrelsy* version with a verse which is in fact found in the ballad “Sweet William and Fair Margaret” (Child 74), which Scott would have been familiar with this due to its inclusion in Ritson’s *Select Collection* (1783; 2: 190) and Percy’s *Reliques* (1765; 3: 121):

The wrath of the Black Douglas, which vented itself upon the briar, far surpasses the usual stanza:

“At length came the clerk of the parish,

As you the truth shall hear.

And by mischance he cut them down,

Or else they had still been there.”

(*MSB* 1803; 3: 245.)

For his ‘improved’ version, Scott looked to the final verse of “Fair Janet”, a ballad of Jane Scott’s that was collected by Laidlaw, but not included in the *Minstrelsy*, as noted above. The final verse of this ballad as noted by Laidlaw is unfortunately difficult to read due to damage to the manuscript:

Till By there came an ill french Lord
An ill death may he die

[*MS damaged.*] For he’s [+++’d] up the bonnie brier
An [+++ +++ +++]

(NLS MS 877, f. 83v.)
However, the similarity to the ending of the *Minstrelsy* version of “The Douglas Tragedy” is clear:

```
But bye and rade the Black Douglas,
And wow but he was rough!
For he pull’d up the bonny brier,
And flang’d in St Mary’s loch.
(MSB 1803:3, 250.)
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It is quite possible this verse is Scott’s own creation, and that he was unable to resist neatly tying the “complete locality” of the ballad up through a final reference to a historical character and a local landmark.

This ballad provides what is probably the best example of Scott’s selective editing concerning people and place, and his utilisation of the term “tradition” to reinterpret the sites of memory he found on his travels. The representation of “The Douglas Tragedy” in the *Minstrelsy* shows local lore concerning the Douglas family being mapped onto a ballad narrative which, as may be seen above, had previously shown little evidence of any locality.
Figure 8. Blackhouse Farm, Feb. 2012 (photograph: L. MacRae).

Figure 9. Blackhouse Tower, Feb. 2012 (photograph: L. MacRae).
The Annan Street Stone and “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow”

We have discussed above how Scott selected and synthesised cultural memories surrounding a ruined tower with its surrounding landscape, creating a backdrop for the “The Douglas Tragedy” which almost certainly augmented local tradition. The ballad version itself was also carefully selected, indicating how Scott’s editorial processes of memory-making may be distinguished by an interdependence of textual, historical and physical settings. The following example concerns an ancient stone which Scott was originally shown by Laidlaw on his first visit, and subsequently connected to the ballad “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow” (MSB 56). This site of memory, the form of which had a particular antiquarian appeal to Scott, would inform interpretations of the ballad which would subsequently be re-worked in later editions of the Minstrelsy.

In “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow” the protagonist is prepared for combat by his lover and sets out to meet with his assailants. In many versions, the match is opposed by the woman’s family and is the cause of the feud. On reaching the dens of Yarrow, he finds he is grossly outnumbered, often by nine to one, although in some versions the discrepancy is greater. Despite a valiant defence, the inevitable outcome of the fight is his death, often brought about by trickery. The ballad normally ends with his lover dreaming of his death, whereupon she sets out to grieve over the body, in some cases washing and carrying the corpse home, and refusing her father’s incitements to marry elsewhere. In certain versions (including the Minstrelsy ballad) the protagonist is a nobleman; in others he is a servant. The ballad remains one of the most commonly

111 See for example the version collected by Thomas Wilkie in MS 877, ff.122-124, in which the protagonist is “a servant Lad in Gall a” (MS 877, f. 122r). Scott did not use this version.
performed and recorded Border ballads today, and it would appear that its popularity is of long-standing. Scott noted in the introduction to the ballad in the *Minstrelsy*’s third volume of 1803 that “The editor found it easy to collect a variety of copies, but very difficult, indeed, to select from them such a collated edition, as may, in any degree, suit the taste of ‘these more light and giddy-paced times’” (*MSB* 1803; 3: 72).\(^\text{112}\) Seven manuscript versions are preserved in MS 877 collected by Laidlaw, Hogg, and Thomas Wilkie; a version was also sent in by Christiana Greenwood.\(^\text{113}\) Hogg provided two versions. Laidlaw’s was taken down from the singing of one Nelly Laidlaw, who may have been a relation of Hogg’s from his mother’s side of the family. Hogg’s two versions do not give a source but it is likely that they were family ballads.

As Scott acknowledged, above, the *Minstrelsy* ballad inserted into the third volume in 1803 was assembled from many different versions. Scott’s key sources were a version from the servant Nelly Laidlaw (MS 877, ff. 52v-53v), “The Dowie Houms o’ Yarrow” from Hogg (MS 877, f. 250), and three verses from a four-verse fragment in David Herd’s manuscript entitled “A fragment – to the tune of Leaderhaughs Yarrow” (Herd 1776; 1: 35). Scott also enhanced the ballad’s local credentials by giving the name of the hill which the doomed lover

\(^{112}\) Here Scott recalls Count Orsino’s lines in *Twelfth Night*:
That old and antique song we heard last night
Methought it did relieve my passion much
More than light airs and recollected terms
Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times…

\(^{113}\) Christiana Greenwood (1796-1822) lived in London but had grown up in Kelso. She opened communications with Scott in February 1805, sending him a version of “Mary Hamilton” (MSB 41) as sung by her mother and aunt, who had in turn learnt it from an old lady named Kirstan Scott at Longnewton, near Jedburgh around 1755. As well as this ballad and a version of “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow,” entitled “Yetts of Gowrie”, Greenwood also sent Scott a version of “Thomas the Rhymer” (MSB 45) and “Earl Bichet” (Child 53) although the latter was not included the *Minstrelsy*. 
climbs on his way to the fight as “Tennies bank” (MSB 1803; 3: 76). For the commentary, he quoted the information provided by Hogg prefixed to his own version of “The Dowie Houms o’ Yarrow”:

The name of the murderer is said to be Annan and a name I believe merely conjectural from the name of the place where they are said both to be buried which at this day is called Annan’s Treat a low muir lying to the west of Yarrow church where two huge tall stones are erected below which the least child that can walk the road will tell you the two lords are buried that were slain in a duel. (Hogg, NLS MS 877, f. 250r.)

Comparing the information above with Scott’s notes in the Minstrelsy reveals that Scott drew directly from Hogg’s information in order to emphasise how the ballad and its events had sunk deeply into the cultural memory of the area:

The name of the murderer is said to have been Annan, and the place of combat is still called Annan’s Treat. It is a low moor, on the banks of the Yarrow, lying to the west of Yarrow kirk. Two tall unhewn masses of stone are erected, about eighty yards distant from each other; and the least child, that can herd a cow, will tell the passenger, that there lie ‘the two lords, who were slain in single combat’ (MSB 1803; 3: 73-74).

These stones still stand today and are known as “The Glebe Stone” and “The Warrior’s Rest” (see Figs. 10 & 11). They were also pointed out to him by Laidlaw while showing Scott the area (see Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 69).

114 ‘Tennies Bank’ refers to an area close to the Tinnis burn, a tributary of Yarrow Water which runs close to the plain on which the combat is said to have occurred.
In the third edition of the *Minstrelsy*, published in November 1806, the categorisation of the ballad itself was changed, as “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow”
was also shifted from the historical to the romantic ballad category in the 1806 edition, perhaps because the “duel” to which Scott refers evidently differs from the ambush described by the ballad, although Scott was still able to name-check Francis Napier, eighth Lord Napier of Merchiston (1758-1823) as a relative of the victim in the ballad.\textsuperscript{115} Since the 1803 edition, Scott had also consulted Alexander Nisbet’s \textit{System of Heraldry} (1722) and had gleaned new information on the location of the duel and the combatants. A stone dug up in the new location which Laidlaw had shown him on the farm of Whitehope gained a new relevance and was also referenced as a site marker for the ballad. The adjusted introduction presented a different set of historical characters, although the link to the Scotts of Harden remained:

…from a passage in Nisbet's Heraldry, he [\textit{Scott}] now believes the ballad refers to a duel fought at Deucharswyre, of which Annan's Treat is a part, betwixt John Scott of Tushielaw and his brother-in-law Walter Scott, third son of Robert of Thirlestane, in which the latter was slain. In ploughing Annan's Treat, a huge monumental stone, with an inscription, was discovered; but being rather scratched than engraved, and the lines being run through each other, it is only possible to read one or two Latin words. It probably records the event of the combat. —The person slain was the male ancestor of the present Lord Napier. \textit{(MSB 1806; 2: 354-5.)}

The RCAHMS record for this stone identifies it as “The Yarrow Stone”, an early 6th century Christian monument to two chieftains, inscribed with a roughly executed Latin inscription which epigraphists have struggled to interpret with any great accuracy.\textsuperscript{116} Scott had set eyes on it during his first visit to Laidlaw in the spring of 1802 when he, Leyden and Laidlaw went to have dinner

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item By 1806 Lord Francis Napier, who had fought in the American War of Independence under General Burgoyne, was a Scottish representative peer and lord lieutenant of Selkirkshire (1797). See http://lordbyron.cath.lib.vt.edu. 28/1/14.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
at Whitehope, the farm leased by Laidlaw’s uncle (and future father-in-law) Thomas Ballantyne. Laidlaw described showing the stone to Scott and Leyden at this time in the hope that the visitors would be able to decipher the markings on its surface, and linked the artefact to the site of an unspecified skirmish:

It so happened that while breaking up part of a plain moor called Annan’s Treat, my uncle’s ploughman had come upon a large flat stone; and as all large stones were, as he knew, to be removed, he called for help and dug out a stone nearly six feet long with an inscription upon it which was soon discovered to be Latin, but very much defaced. It appeared to have been brought to the place where it was found when there were no carriages in the country, for there was a mark hammered round one end for a chain or rope whereby it might be dragged. I had done what I could to decipher it without success, not getting beyond four or five words. However, it was just the thing to interest Walter Scott and his friend, for it had been found upon, or quite near to, the place where the common tradition of the neighbourhood said there had been a battle, and that both the leaders were slain. Of course Scott and Leyden tried upon the very rude inscription both their eyes and their imagination. (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 69.)

Scott’s imagination was certainly ignited by the stone’s close proximity to the Dens of Yarrow. Although Laidlaw, like Scott, used the place-name “Annan’s Treat”, the area is known today as “Annan Street”, the etymology of ‘street’ being the Roman term for road or strung out village settlement. We can date Scott’s connection of the ballad and the stone to at least April 1806, when Scott wrote to historian and lawyer Malcolm Laing, “I would be very happy to shew you the wonders of the forest particularly a monument dug up where the scene of the ballad of the Dowie Dens of Yarrow is said to be. It has an inscription but unfortunately illegible” (Scott to Malcolm Laing, 14 Apr. 1806; SL 1: 294).

Scott’s representation of the stone’s identity as a site of memory can be
directly linked to Laidlaw and his uncle’s farm. However, the stone’s connection with Scott does not end there. In 1828 Scott gave a drawing of this stone to Edward Drummond-Hay, fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, accompanied by the following note in Scott’s hand:  

The drawing was made by George Scott, who accompanied Mungo Park to Africa, and died there. The original is a rough sandstone about six feet long, by perhaps two and a half feet broad, which was raised by the plough at a place called Annan Street, upon the farm of Wheathope, belonging to his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch. The place is about half a mile from the church of Yarrow, and is said at some remote period to have been the site of an ecclesiastical building. There are two large fragments of rock at the distance of about 120 yards from each other. Here the memorable duel is said to have taken place, which gave occasion to Hamilton’s ballad of “Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny bride” and other ballads on the same subject. The common tradition is, that both the knights, whose names are reported to have been Scott, fell in the duel. Sir Walter Scott had the good fortune of preserving this curious relic of antiquity, which, from circumstances which he does not think worthy [of] record, he had accidentally discovered was about to be blown up with gunpowder some years ago. (Scott, in Smith 1860-2: 526-527.)

The note mentions several points first flagged up in the introduction to the Minstrelsy ballad. However, Scott no longer suggests that the stone commemorates the Deucharswyre duel, although the two sites are still bound together in his memory. The drawing of the stone (see Fig. 12, below), is a copy of George Scott’s original sketch, and was originally labelled with the words “Selkirkshire, Druid stone found at Annan Street, figured with ye sun and moon” (Smith 1860-2: 527).

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117 Scott’s journal entry for March 9 1828 relates that a visit from Edward William Auriol Drummond Hay interrupted an otherwise unhappy day: “Drummond Hay, the antiquary and Lyon-herald, came in. I do not know anything which relieves the mind so much from the sullens as trifling discussions about antiquarian old womanries […] the diversion is a relief though the object is of little importance. I cannot tell what we talked of.” (Scott, in Anderson 1998: 495.) It is quite possible that the drawing of the stone and its accompanying note was exchanged during the meeting.
George Scott had grown up at Singlees Farm; his father had employed James Hogg as a young boy. He had trained as a draughtsman in London and accompanied the explorer Mungo Park (1771-1806) on Park’s final expedition to Africa, which left in January 1805 and was an attempt to reach the source of the River Niger. The drawing must therefore have been done before 1805, and so would coincide not only with the period when Scott was first shown the stone, but also with Scott’s friendship with Park which began in the year before his departure, when Park was living in a cottage at Foulshiels, Yarrow. On hearing that the stone was under threat, Scott applied to the Duke of Buccleuch who had it moved from Whitehope to Bowhill, during which process it was slightly damaged (see Smith 1860-2: 531-532). Today the stone is set upright in a field

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*118* Mungo Park is named in the second edition of the *Minstrelsy* as having contributed two extra verses to the ballad “The Outlaw Murray” (see *MSB* 1803; 1: 5). None of the party survived the expedition to Africa, with many falling victim to disease on the way. George Scott died of illness around June 1805. Park drowned along with the remaining members of the expedition in 1806, when their flat-bottomed boat sunk in the rapids at Bussa after a conflict with local tribesmen. (See Fyfe, *ODNB* entry for Mungo Park, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21278 18/6/14.) Both Scott and Laidlaw had a long friendship with Mungo Park’s brother Archibald, in whose company Laidlaw first saw Scott in 1799 or 1800 (see Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 66).
on the Farm of Whitefield, Yarrow, and is generally known as “The Yarrow Stone” (Fig. 13).

![The Yarrow Stone today. Photo credit: Ancient Stones (http://ancient-stones.co.uk, 27/5/14). Used with permission.](image)

Figure 13: The Yarrow Stone today. Photo credit: Ancient Stones (http://ancient-stones.co.uk, 27/5/14). Used with permission.

Although the drawing was originally labelled as a “druid” stone, Laidlaw’s account tells us that from an early stage the inscription was identified as Latin, and that following its disinterment at Whitehope, “the stone had been most judiciously placed for the convenience of the learned, who were mostly clergymen, on a piece of smooth turf adjoining to the house.” (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 69.) Both Scott and Leyden attempted to decipher it on their first visit to Whitehope and it was evidently something of a local attraction. In the memorial transformation which saw the “druid stone” recreated as the grave marker commemorated in the *Minstrelsy* ballad, Scott drew on folk memory and condensed cultural memory in a physical object. The stone was therefore
preserved not only as an antiquarian object whose value lay in its mysterious antiquity, but as an artefact that imparted value through its connection to intangible lore. This example allows us to see Scott entering into his own form of tradition-making, and the letter to Laing quoted above indicates that Scott would also have shown visitors the stone, propagating a version of its history. The ballad and the physical object were therefore linked in their capacity as containers of memory, open to interpretation. By 1828, however, the stone had also become a symbol of Scott’s own past as an artefact that he had managed to preserve from destruction.

**Henderland and “The Lament of the Border Widow”**

Scott’s main source for “The Lament of the Border Widow” was a copy supplied by James Hogg (MS 877, ff. 245v). Scott made some minor alterations to Hogg’s version in the *Minstrelsy*, although the final verse in which the singer tells of twining her heart with a lock of her deceased lover’s hair was an adaptation from another version of the ballad published in the *Scots Musical Museum* under the title “Oh ono chrio” (Johnson 1787; 1: 90). Scott, probably recognising the similarity of the ballad to “The Famous Flower of Serving Men” (Child 106),\(^{119}\) introduced “The Lament of the Border Widow” as “a fragment, obtained from recitation, in the Forest of Ettrick” (*MSB* 1803; 3: 80). In reality, the *Minstrelsy* ballad is a concise but self-contained lament in which the widow mourns the murder of her husband, describing the manner of his death and how she sewed a shroud, buried him and kept watch over the corpse. The information Scott received from Hogg and Laidlaw allowed him to connect the ballad to the death

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\(^{119}\) Percy included in this ballad in the *Reliques* as “The Lady Turned Serving Man” (Percy 1765: 3, 87).
of William Cockburn of Henderland, a reiver who was put to death in 1530 as a teenager James V moved against the dominant clans of the Borders. Adam Scott of Tushielaw and Johnie Armstrong of Gilnockie were also among those who were executed during this period. According to contemporary records compiled by the antiquary and scholar Robert Pitcairn, (1793-1855), Cockburn, like Adam Scott, was beheaded in Edinburgh rather than “hanged over the gate of his own tower” as tradition maintained (MSB 1803; 3: 80; see also Pitcairn 1833; 1: 146). Although historically inaccurate, then, the location of Cockburn’s death was retained and maintained in the cultural memory, perpetuating the injustice of a summary execution which embodies James V’s brutal suppression of powerful Border families. As Scott discovered, two sites of memory in the area had taken shape around the circumstances of Cockburn’s death: the Dowie Linn waterfall and Cockburn’s tombstone, Henderland.120

On Scott’s second visit to Blackhouse, he and Laidlaw rode south-west to Ettrick, taking a scenic route around St Mary’s Loch and Dryhope Tower (Fig. 14), “so intimately associated with the memory of Mary Scott, lady of the great Wat of Harden” (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 69). They then passed Henderland, the site traditionally associated with the ballad “The Lament of the Border Widow”:

I had ere this written Mr. Scott the traditional account of the death of Cockburn of Henderland, and in passing he expressed a desire to see the foundations of the old chapel and the burying-ground and the tombstone of Percy de Cockburn and his wife Marjorie. This we did accordingly, and went and saw the Dhu Linn where the lady sat while they were hanging her husband, and proceeded on our way. (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 69.)

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120 Recent archaeological investigations indicate that the grave almost certainly belongs to a Cockburn of a later date. See http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/51229/details/cockburn+s+castle+henderland/. 23/9/13.
The letter that Laidlaw mentions above can be traced to correspondence with Scott from 1802, where Laidlaw notes “A copy of the inscription on Cockburn’s tombstone at Henderland had been taken by one Armstrong who surveyed & published a map of Tweeddale some time ago. […] I got it from one of our herds at Bowerhope.” (Laidlaw to Scott, September 1802; NLS MS 3874, f. 182.) The herdsman in question is likely to have been Alex Laidlaw, mentioned above as having collected a version of “Sir Patrick Spens” from Marion Brown of Helmsburn. The printed source mentioned is the Companion to the Map of the County of Peebles, Or Tweedale published in 1775 by the surveyor, map-maker and publisher Mostyn Armstrong (1769-1791). As the title suggests, this is a descriptive account which originally accompanied Armstrong’s “Map of the County of Peebles, or Tweedale” dedicated to William Douglas of Ruglen.121 The information in the Companion suggests that in 1775 the tombstone in question had recently been exhumed, but that the memory of Cockburn’s manner of execution meant that the tradition and the site of memory had become connected:

At Henderland, in Meggot [sic], is the ruins of a kirk, out of which was lately dug, a tomb stone, the character on which are legible, viz. a blank shield supported by the base and staff of a cross, erect; and a sword on the sinister side thereof; with this inscription: “Here lyes perys of cocburn and his wife marjory.” Nisbet says, that Piers de Cockburn of Henderland, was “the root on the branches of that name, now extinct.” – The country people have a tradition anecdote, that the last of that name in possession, was an outlaw, and hanged over his own gate. Near to Henderland is a small cataract, called Dow, or, Black Linn. (Armstrong 1775: 65.)

121 A copy of the original map is held in the map library, National Library of Scotland (EMS.s.48A).
Laidlaw’s local knowledge in this instance allowed Scott to enter into the territory of local lore on his visit. Going beyond the initial objective of visiting the grave of the executed border reiver, Laidlaw showed Scott the waterfall, preserved in folk memory as the place where the Cockburn’s wife allegedly sat while her husband was executed, and a memorial which folk memory held to mark his and his wife’s final resting place (see Fig. 15). Such significance was consequently perpetuated by Scott’s representation of the area in the *Minstrelsy* introduction to “The Lament of the Border Widow”:

This fragment, obtained from recitation, in the Forest of Ettrick, is said to relate to the execution of Cokburne of Henderland, a border freebooter, hanged over the gate of his own tower, by James V, in the course of that memorable expedition, in 1529, which was fatal to Johnie Armstrang, Adam Scott of Tushielaw, and many other marauders. The vestiges of the castle of Henderland are still to be traced upon the farm of that name, belonging to Mr Murray of Henderland. They are situated near the mouth of the river Meggat, which falls into the lake of St Mary, in Selkirkshire. (*MSB* 1803; 3: 80.)

Scott’s description of this site may be seen to echo his treatment of the ballads themselves as memorial traces which, in the *Minstrelsy*, can be made whole and brought to public attention. In the following passage, the natural and man-made ‘frame’ the events of the past and direct the reader to the tangible, artefactual traces connected to the ballad:

A mountain torrent, called Henderland Burn, rushes impetuously from the hills, through a rocky chasm, named the Dow-glen, and passes near the site of the tower. To the recesses of this glen the wife of Cokburne is said to have retreated, during the execution of her husband; and a place, called the Lady's seat, is still shewn, where she is said to have striven to drown, amid the roar of a foaming cataract, the tumultuous noise, which announced the close of his existence. In a deserted burial-place, which once surrounded the chapel of the castle, the monument of Cokburne and his lady is still shewn. It is a large stone, broken into three parts; but some
armorial bearings may be yet traced, and the following inscription is still legible, though defaced: Here lyes Perys of Cokburne and his Wyfe Marjory. (MSB 1803; 3: 81.)

The publication of the ballad in the Minstrelsy therefore brought to light what had previously been ‘hidden’, and a virtually forgotten site of memory was thus revealed and recreated in print. Scott’s description is characterised by the disintegration of the reivers’ way of life as opposed to the enforced order brought about by royal intervention. In contrast to the noisy torrent of the waterfall, the burial site of the Border reiver is deserted and overlooked; the stone itself broken in three places, and the inscription barely legible. The ballad populates the “deserted” scene with its characters from the past, deciphering the “defaced” memorial inscription on the tomb which may still be seen despite its fragmented state. Scott also gave a detailed description of the surrounding landscape, and the tower of Tushielaw, the remains of which are “yet visible”:

After the execution, James marched rapidly forward, to surprise Adam Scott of Tushielaw, called the King of the Border, and sometimes the King of Thieves. A path through the mountains, which separate the vale of Ettrick from the head of Yarrow, is still called the King's Road, and seems to have been the rout which he followed. The remains of the tower of Tushielaw are yet visible, overhanging the wild banks of the Ettrick; and are an object of terror to the benighted peasant, from an idea of their being haunted by spectres. From these heights, and through the adjacent county of Peebles, passes a wild path, called still the Thief's Road, from having been used chiefly by the marauders of the border. (MSB 1803; 3: 81-82.)

Like the ballad itself, Hogg was almost certainly also Scott’s source of this location information, as Hogg’s own notes to his poem The Queen’s Wake (1813) recount the same episode (see Hogg 1822: 368-9). Writing to Scott in 1806, Hogg took issue with Scott’s naming of the Dow Glen: “in the lament of
the border widow the Lady’s seat is in the *dow linn* not glen.” (Letter from Hogg to Scott, 18 Apr. 1806; in Hughes 2004; 1: 60.)

Figure 14. Dryhope Tower, Dec. 2012 (photograph: L. MacRae).
Disputed Memories: Hogg, “Auld Maitland” and the *Minstrelsy*

James Hogg’s knowledge of the oral tradition was extensive and he came from a family of notable tradition bearers (see Petrie 1983). His mother Margaret Laidlaw and his uncle William had learned many of their songs from their own father, William Laidlaw of Phaup (1691-c.1774). In his day, “Will o’ Phaup”, as the latter was known, had been renowned for his athletic prowess as well as his illicit still, and Hogg also claimed that his grandfather had been the last person in Scotland to converse with the fairy-folk and live to tell the tale (see Hogg 1829: 213-214).

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122 http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14415/14415-h/images/lg_222-1.jpg
123 His headstone stands in Ettrick churchyard. The epitaph was written by Hogg, who records that his grandfather was born in 1691 and “died in the 84th year of his age.”
Writing his “Memoir” in 1807, Hogg remembered James Laidlaw’s kindness to him “as more like that of a father than an employer” during Hogg’s spell as herdsman at Blackhouse from 1790-1800 (Hogg, in Mack and Hughes 2004: 16). Hogg and William Laidlaw had a close, brotherly friendship, and Hogg’s first attempts at writing poetry were inspired by the books he had access to at Blackhouse. In later life he recalled Laidlaw as “the only person who, for many years, ever pretended to discover the least merit in my essays, either in verse or prose.” (Hogg, in Mack 1972: 12.) On the first visit made by Scott and Leyden to Blackhouse, Laidlaw recounts that he was keen to introduce Hogg to his new acquaintances. He presented Scott and Leyden with a manuscript containing Hogg’s version of the ballad “Auld Maitland” (MSB 53), and recalled the two men’s reaction:

I then went and produced “Auld Maitland” as Hogg had sent it written in his own hand from his uncle’s and his mother’s recitations […] Instantly, both he and Leyden, from their knowledge of the subject, saw and felt that the ballad was indisputably ancient and their eyes sparkled as they exchanged looks. (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 67.)

This ballad recounts how Maitland’s three sons overthrow an English invasion of Scotland led by a nephew of King Edward I. In his recollections, Laidlaw describes that he had heard a servant girl sing a fragment of this ballad:

I heard from one of our servant girls […] part of a ballad called “Auld Maitland” that a grandfather of Hogg’s could repeat, and from the girl herself I got several of the first stanzas, which I took a note of […] This greatly excited my anxiety to procure the whole – for this was a ballad not even hinted at by Mercer in the instructions and desiderata which he had sent from Mr. Scott. I forthwith wrote to Hogg myself, requesting him to exert himself to procure the ballad called ‘Auld Maitland’. (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 67.)
A week later, Laidlaw received a (to some minds suspiciously) full version of the ballad, transcribed by Hogg. Although Leyden apparently reacted so enthusiastically to Scott’s recitation of the ballad from Hogg’s manuscript at Blackhouse that Laidlaw considered him “crazed” (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 67), it did not take him long to voice a warning to Laidlaw on their subsequent ride to Whitehope Farm, where they were to dine with Laidlaw’s uncle Thomas Ballantyne. Leyden had evidently heard of Hogg’s poetry and, according to Laidlaw, issued this caution:

“This Hogg, said he, ‘writes verses, I understand.’ I assured him that he wrote very beautiful verses, and with great facility. ‘But I trust,’ he replied, ‘that there is no fear of his passing any of his own upon Scott for old ballads.’ I again assured him that he would never think of such a thing, and neither he would at that period of his life. ‘Let him beware of forgery,’ cried Leyden with great force and emphasis… (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 68).

Although his inclusion of this recollection is significant, Laidlaw never expresses any doubt that Hogg’s version of the ballad, sung by Hogg’s uncle, who was another William Laidlaw, was the genuine article “corroborated by his mother […] both said they learned it from their father (a still elder Will of Phawhope) and an old man called Andrew Muir” (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 67). Writing to Ellis following this trip, Scott was enthusiastic about his new find, which he dated to the 15th century:

The principal result of our enquiries has been a compleat & perfect copy of “Maitland with his auld berd graie” referred to by Douglas in the Palice of Honor along with John the Reif & other popular character & celebrated also in the poems from the Maitland Ms. You may guess the surprise of Leyden and myself when this was presented to us copied down from the recitation of an old shepherd by a country farmer & with no greater corruptions than might be supposed to be introduced by the
lapse of time & the ignorance of reciters. I do not suppose that the poem originally was composed later than the days of Blind Harry. Many of the old words are retaind which neither the reciter nor copier understood – such are the military engines Sowies, Spring-walls (Springalds) & many others. Tho’ the poetical merit of this literary curiosity is not striking, yet it has an odd energy & dramatic effect… (Scott to Ellis, 10 May 1802; SL 12: 217-218).

By 1802, Hogg had taken over his brother William’s tenancy of Ettrick House Farm about twelve miles south of Blackhouse. Scott did not meet Hogg on that first visit, but on his return to Blackhouse Farm in August or September 1802, Scott and Laidlaw went to visit Hogg at Ramsaycleuch, tenanted by Laidlaw’s cousins Walter and George Bryden. They spent an enjoyable evening at Ramsaycleuch, and the following day they journeyed on to the cottage at Craig Douglas\(^\text{124}\) where Hogg’s parents Robert and Margaret Laidlaw lived. Laidlaw’s account of this meeting is extremely brief: “Hogg and his mother (Margaret Laidlaw) gave us a very kind welcome. Old Robert, his father, we did not see, doubtless considering us crazy fools.” (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 71.) Although he was writing many years later, Laidlaw was evidently as keen to present Hogg in a good light as he had been in 1802, when he recalled that the satisfaction he felt in showing Scott the beautiful evening view over St Mary’s Loch echoed that which he felt when Hogg had met with Scott’s approval: “I felt the same sort of pleasure as when I found that Walter Scott was delighted with Hogg” (Laidlaw, in Sinton 1905: 67).

No manuscript of the ballad that Laidlaw apparently collected from the serving girl has survived in order to compare it with Hogg’s version. The Minstrelsy version of “Auld Maitland” has been the subject of a certain amount of scholarly controversy over the years, and as Batho has observed, “almost

\(^{124}\) See Mack and Hughes 2004: 117.
every later writer on the ballad has had a fling at it.” (Batho 1927: 169.) All in all, Bold’s assessment that it is “unlikely Hogg forged ‘Auld Maitland’ but probable that he touched up the text” (Bold, in Cowan 2000: 124) seems a reasonable assumption. From Laidlaw, we know that the ballad did exist in some form in the oral tradition, and Scott himself heard a version sung by Margaret Laidlaw, Hogg’s mother, on his second trip to Selkirkshire in autumn 1802. Although it is by no means unusual for traditional singers and storytellers to include lengthy tales and songs in their repertoire,125 it does seem improbable that Margaret Laidlaw, Hogg’s mother, would have colluded with her son in learning the ballad’s sixty-five verses at an advanced age and short notice. Given Scott’s own capacious memory, his well-tuned his ear for ballads and the fact that he would have had ample time to study Hogg’s manuscript before hearing Margaret Laidlaw sing the ballad, it is also highly likely that he would have noticed had there been a considerable discrepancy between Margaret Laidlaw’s performance and Hogg’s text. However, owing to his enthusiasm for the “Auld Maitland”, Scott was probably not particularly concerned whether or not Hogg had made some editorial alterations to the ballad. Hogg was in general relatively open about his editing of the ballads he sent Scott; in the case of “The Battle of Otterbourne” (MSB 2), for example, he had acknowledged: “These [lines] I have been obliged to arrange somewhat myself […] Sure no man will like an old song the worse of being somewhat harmonious” (Hogg to Scott, Sept. 10 1802; in

125 Evidence for this in Scotland persisted well into the 20th century in both Gaelic and Scots traditions. In 1953 the singer Jeannie Robertson sang the Alan Lomax “Bonnie Annie and Andrew Lammie”, a version of Child 233 which contained twenty-one verses and lasted over thirteen minutes. Afterwards she told Lomax that she had sung only half of the ballad as she knew it (see Porter and Gower 1995: 258-262). It was not unusual for Gaelic tales to be told over several evenings. The longest story ever recorded in European oral tradition was “Alasdair Mac a’ Cheàird” (Alexander son of the Caird) as told by Angus MacMillan of Griminish, Benbecula. It was recorded by Calum Iain Maclean in 1949 over the course of five nights (see Maclean 1979: 64).
Hughes 2004; 1: 28). For “Auld Maitland”, Scott was aware that Hogg had ‘completed’ verse forty-six by inserting two lines: “Remember, Piercy, aft the Scot / Has cow’rd beneth thy hand” (MSB 1803; 3: 20). After all, Scott readily admitted smoothing rough edges off the Minstrelsy ballads, and he himself did this to the material with which Hogg provided him. Dobie’s remark that “Scott was not looking for what was old, but what was alive” (Dobie 1940: 82) is apposite in this case. Further evidence for this attitude may be found in Scott’s comment on Jane Elliot’s authorship of “The Flowers of the Forest” (MSB 42): “I am not antiquarian enough to be sorry that it is of modern date but on the contrary take no small pride in the genius of the Lady upon whom so large a portion of the spirit of our ancient Border minstrels has descended” (Scott to Somerville, early 1801; in Russell 1963: 64). Scott would later echo this comment in connection to Elizabeth Wardlaw and her creation of the ballad “Hardyknute” in the “Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad”, commenting that in this case, “the public is surely more enriched by the contribution than injured by the deception.” (MSB 1833; 4: 16.)

Scott’s interest in Hogg was the latter’s access to living memory. He preempted any doubts concerning the authenticity of the ballad by citing Hogg directly in the Minstrelsy introduction to “Auld Maitland”, which was printed as the first ballad in the third volume of the 1803 edition. Acknowledging that “it is a curious circumstance, that this interesting tale, so often referred to by ancient authors, should be now recovered in so perfect a state” (MSB 1803; 3: 9), Scott then included an edited version of Hogg’s own statement concerning the ballad, adding the supporting statement that Hogg’s observations “accurately coincide with my personal knowledge” (MSB 1803; 3: 9). In the following quote, Scott’s
additions or alterations are indicated in bold, with Hogg’s original words given in square brackets:

I am surprised to hear that this song is suspected by some to be a modern forgery: the contrary will be best proved, by most of the old people, hereabouts, having a great part of it by heart. Many, indeed, are not aware of the manners of this country [Hogg: place]; [Hogg: but it lately emerged from barbarity, and] till this present age, the poor illiterate people, in these glens, knew of no other entertainment; in the long winter nights, than repeating, and listening to, the [Hogg: those] feats of their ancestors, recorded in songs, which I believe to be handed down, [Hogg: inviolate] from father to son, for many generations; although, no doubt, had a copy been taken [Hogg: of them], at the end of every fifty years, there must have been some difference, [Hogg: which the repeaters would have insensibly fallen into, merely by the change of terms in that period] occasioned by the gradual change of language. I believe it is thus that many very ancient songs have been gradually modernized, to the common ear; while, to the connoisseur, [Hogg: will bear visible] they present marks of their genuine antiquity. [Hogg: The Maitlen, for instance, exclusive of its mode of description, is all composed of words which would, mostly every one, spell and pronounce in the very same dialect that was spoken some centuries ago.] (MSB 1803; 3: 9; also letter from Hogg to Scott, 30 June 1802; in Batho 1927: 27.)

This passage remains an eloquently expressed account of the oral folk process and the dynamics of cultural memory which would be recognised by modern folklorists. Hogg is really describing the dynamics of cultural memory, and in no other place in the Minstrelsy is the fluid state of such remembering so well expressed, albeit in a different context, where Scott’s editorial interventions take the place of gradual alteration over time. It is hard to credit that Scott did not himself recognise this in the case of Hogg and “Auld Maitland”.

The case of “Auld Maitland” also foregrounds the unstable and selective nature of memory texts. In Familiar Anecdotes of Walter Scott, Hogg records the Ramsaycleuch meeting as having taken place in the summer of 1801, and although the date is probably a simple mistake on Hogg’s part, Hogg’s account
of his mother first meeting Scott is very different from Laidlaw’s and is far more critical, pointing to the oral / literary divide which Hogg felt keenly in his perception of the *Minstrelsy*. As noted above, Hogg quotes his mother Margaret Laidlaw, who apparently upbraided Scott on his first visit to her house, objecting to his both having printed the ballads, and the fact that in doing so he had got them ‘wrong’: “They were made for singing an’ no for reading; but ye hae broken the charm now, an’ they’ll never be sung mair. An’ the worst thing is, they’re nouther right spell’d nor right setten down.” (Hogg, 2004 [1834]: 38.) By contrast, Laidlaw’s memories of the same event completely omit any mention of such words passing between Hogg’s mother and Scott. We can never know whether the exchange in question actually occurred; what is clear, however, is that Margaret’s Laidlaw’s words reflect her son’s views on the *Minstrelsy*, as discussed below. As noted above, Laidlaw mildly ascribes any suspicions of Hogg’s involvement in the creation of “Auld Maitland” not to Scott but to his companion Leyden, who in fact never met Hogg.

As a tradition bearer himself with both literary talent and ambitions, Hogg exemplifies the complex oral and literary dynamics inherent in the collection and creation of ‘traditional’ material. His memoirs often appear to position themselves against the memory culture surrounding Scott following the latter’s death. In the treatise “On the Changes in the Habits, Amusement, and Condition of the Scottish Peasantry” (1832), Hogg set out to challenge Scott’s memorial vision of the Borders by way of this ‘insider’ narrative many years after the initial publication of the *Minstrelsy*, emphasising the collection’s status as a contested site of memory. In this essay, Hogg reflected that “the first great falling off is in SONG” (Hogg 1832: 256). He criticised both the *Minstrelsy* and
the antiquarian zeal to collect and preserve such “relics” as forces which had
done a great deal of harm to the song traditions previously retained within the
region’s communal cultural memory. Hogg’s comments reflect an early
consciousness of the oral and literary dynamics which 20th century scholars such
as Walter Ong, Jack Goody and Ruth Finnegan have recognised in the context of
oral poetry: “the text alone cannot constitute the oral poem” (Finnegan 1979: 28).
His opinions also pre-date the modern concerns of folklorists who acknowledge
the performative aspects of ballad singing which cannot be transcribed in text; an
inter-responsive dynamic between singer and audience which Porter has
described as “presence” (see Porter 2009: 7-9). With this in mind, the following
passage in which Hogg recounts his own version of the initial reception of
Scott’s collection is worth quoting at length:

Many a hundred times has it made the hairs of my head creep, and the
tears start into my eyes, to hear such as the Flowers of the Forest, and
Broom of Cowdyknows. Where are those melting strains now? Gone, and
for ever! […] The publication of the Border Minstrelsy had a singular and
unexpected effect in this respect. These songs had floated down on the
stream of oral tradition, from generation to generation, and were regarded
as a precious treasure belonging to the country, but when Mr. Scott’s
work appeared their arcanum was laid open, and a deadening blow was
inflicted on our rural literature and principal
enjoyment by the very
means adopted for their preservation. I shall never forget with what
amazement and dumb dismay the old songsters regarded these relics,
calling out at every verse ‘changed! Changed!’ though it never appeared
to me that they could make out any material change, save in ‘Jamie Telfer
o’ the fair Dodhead.’ On reading the song, both my own parents were
highly offended at the gallant rescues being taken from the Elliots and
given to the Scots [sic]. (Hogg 1832: 257-8.)

Bold and Gilbert have read Hogg’s “strategic deployment” of this
anecdote about the Minstrelsy as a critique upon “the antiquarian endeavour as a
whole” (Bold and Gilbert, 2012: 13). It is certainly true that Hogg’s awareness of
his social exclusion from the ‘elite’ pastime of ballad collecting and publishing was matched by his sense of pride in being closer to the oral tradition than many of his literary colleagues. The motivation which Hogg drew from Scott appears to have been bound up with a desire, on Hogg’s part, to engage in the practice of creation rather than salvage. As he recalled, “the enthusiasm with which [Scott] recited, and spoke of our ancient ballads [...] inspired me with a determination immediately to begin and imitate them” (Hogg 1829: 52). Discussing the changes that the collection brought about within the memory culture of the Border region itself, Hogg’s lament is explicitly concerned with those who sang the songs, and the “deadening blow” inflicted upon the songs by their representation in print and their ensuing apprehension as “relics”. Far from Scott’s assertion in his review of Robert Hartley Cromek’s *Reliques of Robert Burns* that tradition “is a sort of perverted alchemy which converts gold into lead” (Scott 1809: 30), Hogg offered a contradictory opinion: the esoteric power of regional oral tradition had been fundamentally damaged through its exposure to a wider audience in print. The removal of the songs from their context, Hogg maintains, did untold damage; the blame is placed partly upon the editorial processes which change and fix one representation of a past event (the case of the Scott / Elliot controversy in “Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead” will be discussed in the following chapter). Hogg also identifies a less tangible alteration, in that the publication has detached the songs from their cultural meanings and contexts, severing the bonds of cultural memory.

Hogg’s dissatisfaction with Scott’s rendering of the oral tradition in print appears to have stemmed from the largely indefinable yet palpable change which occurs in the transition of song to print; as Hogg represents Margaret Laidlaw
accusing Scott of having “broken the charm” (Hogg 1829: 51). Over a century later, the poet Edwin Muir presented a viewpoint remarkably similar to Hogg’s in the poem “Complaint of the Dying Peasantry.” There is no small irony in the fact that Muir tars Scott and Hogg with the same brush in the following accusatory lines:

…Scott and Hogg, the robbers, came
And nailed the singing tragedies down […]
The singing and harping fled
Into the silent library
(Muir 2008: 76).

It is significant that the legacy of the Minstrelsy extended to those ballad singers who felt the need to distance their own knowledge from Scott’s canonical text. An example of this may be found in correspondence from minister’s daughter Amelia Harris (1815-1891) to William Aytoun, Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at the University of Edinburgh, accompanying a manuscript collection of ballads and songs that Harris and her sister had mainly learned from their mother, Grace Harris, who had in turn learned them from her own nursemaid (see Lyle, McAlpine and McLucas 2002: xxxii). Although she had been brought up in the village of Fearn, Angus, Harris evidently felt the need to distance the tradition with which she was familiar from the Minstrelsy, published nearly sixty years previously, as she wrote “I may also add that I have read very few collections of Old Ballads, and that I was in the habit of daily chaunting those sent, before I knew that the ‘Minstrelsy of the Scottish Borders’ was in existence.” (Amelia Harris to Professor William Aytoun, 1859; Lyle, McAlpine and McLucas 2002: xviii.) Such a statement is testament to the canonical status of the Minstrelsy in collective memory.
Conclusions

Following the departure of John Leyden, Scott found in William Laidlaw a tireless collector of ballads who would search out, write down and transmit his findings. Laidlaw’s extensive network of contributors in Selkirkshire widened the scope of Scott’s ballad-hunting and the existence of extant manuscripts from this time allows a further insight into the editorial processes which the ballads collected by Laidlaw underwent, particular as regards setting them in a specific location. Laidlaw evidently took pains to point out the locations of particular ballads and sites to Scott, who often seized upon particular examples, and, in the *Minstrelsy*, juxtaposed monuments, artefacts and landscapes in order to create environments and locations for his ballad material. In the following chapter, Scott’s engagement with place in the *Minstrelsy* itself will be more closely examined.

Hogg’s introduction to Scott, brought about through Laidlaw, also brought a host of new ballad versions, and Hogg’s own memories of certain events form an interesting contrast to Laidlaw’s recollections. Together the two memory texts are a reminder not only of the selectivity of memory, but the way these memories may be put to different uses. While Laidlaw’s memoir is quietly unassuming, Hogg’s text challenges Scott’s memorial vision of the Borders by asserting that the printed collection had a stultifying effect on the area’s oral tradition. Hogg evidently set out to critique his erstwhile acquaintance as well as to inform and entertain, and provide an alternative version of past events, something he also frequently did in the case of the ballads themselves.
Chapter 6

A Sense of Place

Introduction

The previous two chapters examined two retrospective sources in which Robert Shortreed and William Laidlaw recollected their involvement in familiarising Scott with parts of Roxburghshire and Selkirkshire during the 1790s and the early 1800s. As well as exploring the networks of cultural memory to which Scott was introduced during the initial years in which the Minstrelsy was created, these recollections provided examples of the collection’s editorial engagement with sites of memory such as Blackhouse Tower (“The Douglas Tragedy”) and the Annan Street Stone (“The Dowie Dens of Yarrow”). These guided journeys gave Scott an intimate knowledge of the area’s features and lore, which he in turn employed in the representation of place and locality in the Minstrelsy. In the present chapter, the importance of regionality in Scott’s selection of ballad versions will be assessed, followed by examples of the editing process through which Scott located, re-located and explained places in the Minstrelsy. Exploring David Lowenthal’s statement that “the locus of memory lies more readily in place than in time” (Lowenthal 1997: 180), concepts of memory, locality and “sense of place” will be considered in relation to the ballads and their settings as sites of cultural memory.

Scott’s early explorations of the Border region and his developing interest in antiquarian endeavours including archaeology are evident in a letter of 1791,
in which he wrote to his friend and fellow student William Clerk of his enjoyment in being surrounded by historically significant space. He described his first glimpse of the battlefields of Flodden and Otterburn, both sites carrying with them a host of historical associations immortalised in song and story. Foreshadowing the approach which he would take in compiling the *Minstrelsy’s* notes, Scott went on to compare historical accounts to the surrounding landscape, attaching particular significance to the occasions on which the two could be matched:

To add to my satisfaction, we are amidst places renowned by the feats of former days; each hill is crowned with a tower, or camp, or cairn, and in no situation can you be near more fields of battle: Flodden, Otterburn, Chevy Chase, Ford Castle, Chillingham Castle, Copland Castle, and many another scene of blood, are within the compass of a forenoon’s ride. (Scott to William Clerk, 26 Aug. 1791; SL 1: 18-19.)

Scott continued the letter with an account of his visit to Flodden, and a description of the battle by the historian Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie, “who narrates at large, and to whom I give credit for a most accurate and clear description, agreeing perfectly with the ground.” (Scott to William Clerk, 26 Aug. 1791; SL 1: 19.) It is clear that even at this stage, the lie of the land was integral in drawing the past and present together more tightly in Scott’s mind.

Western thought has long conceived of place and memory as intrinsically linked, and schemes of external symbolic memory storage which map image onto place, and vice versa, extend well beyond the “art of memory” and the classical rhetoric of ancient Greece and Rome. For example, culturally referenced structures of knowledge retention and transmission in oral-mythic cultures have been outlined by ethnologist and ballad scholar Emily Lyle, who
has suggested that the interplay of physical and imagined worlds in oral societies should be considered more widely “as factors in the establishment and retention of a cultural reservoir” (Lyle 1993: 71). Key to the concept of the “External Memory Field” (Donald, quoted in Lyle 1993: 64) is the integration of objects and landscape in the natural world with an internalised mental map. Also of interest are the ways in which these systems use physical places and objects (which may or may not bear evidence of having been employed in this method), whilst also incorporating imaginary elements, so embodying the internal-external pairing.

In the *Minstrelsy*’s editorial commentary, Scott’s representation of the ways in which artefacts in the landscape and a ballad can act as sites of memory is clear. In the introduction to the ballad “Hobie Noble” (MSB 12), for example, both the ballad and an inscribed stone are presented as monuments which maintain the memory of the Armstrongs of Mangertoun:

> Of the castle of Mangertoun, so often mentioned in these ballads, there are very few vestiges. It was situated on the banks of the Liddel, below Castletoun. In the wall of a neighbouring mill, which has been entirely built from the ruins of the tower, there is a remarkable stone, bearing the arms of the Lairds of Mangertoun, and a long broad sword, with the figures 1583, probably the date of building or repairing the castle. On each side are the letters, S.A. and E.E. standing probably for Simon Armstrong, and Elizabeth Elliot. Such is the only memorial of the Laird of Mangertoun, except those rude ballads which the Editor now offers to the public. (*MSB* 1802; 1: 167.)

None of the six editions of the *Minstrelsy* includes a map of the Border region, but as the second edition was being prepared for the press in 1803, Scott’s correspondent George Ellis evidently suggested adding one. Scott’s reply pleads a lack of time as well as his own lack of expertise in “geometry [and]
surveying” (Scott to Ellis, Jan. 30 1803; SL 1: 174). Scott uses a quote from “Hobbie Noble” to illustrate his longstanding familiarity with the countryside, as he refers to staying with his aunt Janet during the period of ill-health that occasioned his return to Kelso in 1781:

My education was unfortunately interrupted by a long indisposition, which occasioned my residing for about two years in the country with a good maiden aunt who permitted and encouraged me to run about the fields as wild as any buck that ever fled from the face of man. Hence my geographical knowledge is merely practical, and though I think that in the South Country “I could be a guide worth ony twa that may in Liddesdale be found”126 yet I believe Hobby Noble or Kinmont Willie would beat me at laying down a map. (Scott to Ellis, 30 Jan. 1803; SL 1: 174-5.)

Arguably, the Minstrelsy needs no illustrative map; Scott’s editorial commentary is minute in its negotiation of regionality and physical space with regard to the imaginative and memorial import carried by the ballads and their surrounding lore. In recent years, scholars of landscape, including cultural geographers, have placed an emphasis on the ways in which our experience of place is culturally conditioned. Daniels and Cosgrove, for example, have defined the term ‘landscape’ as “a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings” (Daniels and Cosgrove 1988: 1). Much of this activity revolves around interpretations of the past within the present. Simon Schama’s assertion that “landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock” (Schama 1995: 6-7) recognises that reservoirs of cultural and personal memory are a central component in the experience of place.

126 The lines are from verse 11 of “Hobbie Noble”, in which Noble addresses Sim Armstrong and a band of men, offering to lead them on a raid into England: “But will ye stay till the day gae down / Until the night come o’er the grund? / And I’ll be a guide worth ony twa, / That may in Liddesdale be found.”(MSB 1802; 1: 170.)
Place, landscape and the physical artefacts within that landscape are integral constituents of the cultural memory of an area. ‘Place’ is itself a charged concept; distinctions between ‘space’ and ‘place’ may be considered in conjunction with the *Minstrelsy’s* representation of tangible and intangible memory sites within the Border region. Discussing the symbolic power of place as connected to memory, Aleida Assmann refers to ‘space’ as denoting, in this context, “a neutralised, desymbolised category of functionality and availability, whereas ‘place’ is charged with mysterious and unspecified significance” (A. Assmann 2012: 284.) The critic Martin Philips has also distinguished between the terms ‘place’ and ‘space’, characterising ‘place’ as a specific, subjective interpretation of the less concrete term ‘space.’ For Philips, ‘place’ is a “value-loaded” term, “distinct from the more abstract notion of a space which it seeks to represent” (Philips 2011: 172). In the *Minstrelsy*, historical reference to the past is one way in which place is ‘charged’ with significance and subject to interpretation through dynamic recollection of the past. Two general ‘sites of memory’ may be identified regarding place in the *Minstrelsy*: landscapes and artefacts. In the first instance, however, the *Minstrelsy* and the general concept of locality will be explored below.

**Local Attachments**

In his correspondence, particularly during the preparation of the first and second editions of the *Minstrelsy* as well as wider discussions of Border lore, Scott shows himself to be intensely aware of the hallmarks of oral tradition, such as the
interrelation of ballad verses, and the tendency of the tradition to localise its subject. In the introduction to the covenanting ballad “The Battle of Bothwell-Bridge” (MSB 66), for example, he observed that “[l]ocal Tradition is always apt to trace foreign events to the domestic causes, which are more immediately in the narrator’s view” (MSB 1803; 3: 217). As we saw in Scott’s careful delineation of tradition and locality regarding Blackhouse Tower and “The Douglas Tragedy” (MSB 69) in the previous chapter, locality was an aspect which he himself utilised under his assumed mantle of Border minstrel.

Place and regionality were, in theory, guiding principles for Scott in his editing of the *Minstrelsy*. In 1801, discussing the ballad “Annan Water” (MSB 39) with James Currie, Scott recorded that he considered “locality […] among the highest graces of which the old Ballad is susceptible” (Scott to Currie, 30 Jul. 1801; SL 1: 120). The importance of locality to Scott’s selection process also appears in a letter to Laidlaw in early 1803, in which Scott wrote that, interesting as he found Laidlaw’s collected version of “The Daemon Lover” (MSB 96) he would “much prefer Tushilaw. I would make a point of squeezing him in. The locality and traditional history of such a ballad gives it great interest above a mere legend” (Scott to Laidlaw, 21 Jan. 1803; SL 1: 170). However, Laidlaw was un convinced that this ballad would be acceptable to Scott, writing in the autumn of 1802, “Tho’ Tushilaw’s lines are beautiful some of them yet I dare say you would not think them worth inserting in your work without some more tradition proving them ancient” (Laidlaw to Scott, 28 Sep. 1803; NLS MS 3874, ff. 182-

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127 Introducing “The Broomfield Hill” (MSB 73) for example, Scott noted that “considering how very apt the most accurate reciters are to patch up one ballad with verses from another, the utmost caution cannot avoid such errors” (MSB 1803; 3: 269).

128 This ballad was finally included in the romantic ballad section in 1812. Laidlaw collected the ballad from Walter Grieve of Craik, and acknowledged adding four verses (see Carruthers, in Chambers 1871: 122).
183). In January 1803, James Hogg sent Scott the elaborately worded love lyric “Tushilaw’s lines”, but Hogg’s Romantic composition was clearly far from the historical ballad that Scott was hoping to unearth in his early correspondence with Laidlaw (see letter from Hogg to Scott, 7 Jan. 1803, in Hughes 2004: 1: 33).

As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, the contents of the _Minstrelsy_ cannot be said to be entirely ‘local’ despite the titular emphasis on the Scottish Border region. On the publication of the first edition in 1802, twelve out of the twenty-six ballads in the collection’s romantic section came from the North East of Scotland via the manuscripts of Anna Gordon, Mrs Brown of Falkland (1747-1810). Until she married Andrew Brown, minister of Falkland in Fife in 1788 at the age of forty-one, Brown had spent her entire life in Old Aberdeen (see Rieuwerts 2011: 20). In the _Minstrelsy_’s introduction, Scott thanked the advocate and historian Alexander Fraser Tytler from whom he had borrowed a manuscript copy of Brown’s ballads in 1795, acknowledging the “very material assistance” that access to her ballads had given him (_MSB_ 1802; 1: cvi). For her part, Brown was distressed to find herself named in the published collection. As she wrote to Robert Jamieson in December 1802, “[a] privete [sic] acknowledgement was all I ever wish’d for or expected” (Brown, in Rieuwerts 2011: 20-21).

All in all, Scott acknowledged the Brown MSS as a source for twelve _Minstrelsy_ ballads, all of which are to be found in the romantic section. Sigrid Rieuwerts has carried out extensive research on the Brown ballad MSS, identifying five separate manuscripts, which she categorises A-E (see Rieuwerts 2011: 3-20). Brown B, the manuscript lent to Scott by Tytler in 1795, is in the hand of Brown’s nephew Robert Eden Scott, and had been given to Tytler’s
father William by Thomas Gordon, Brown’s father. It is from Brown B that Scott drew eight of the twelve Brown ballads for the Minstrelsy. In 1795, Scott set to work copying out all of the ballads and some of their accompanying tunes from this source. His manuscript of “Scottish Songs” still survives today (Abbotsford Library N3), although he removed the ballads he would later use in the Minstrelsy from this folio copy. This probably occurred when Scott consulted this manuscript again in early 1800 when he and Leyden were deep in preparations for the Minstrelsy. A further manuscript copied out by Brown herself at Tytler’s request in 1800 (Brown C), was also used by Scott as a source for four Minstrelsy ballads.

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<td>Brown C</td>
<td>Jellon Grame and Lillie Flower</td>
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<td>Thomas Rymer, &amp; Queen of Elfland</td>
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129 William Tytler of Woodhouselee (1711-1792) was one of the directors of the Edinburgh Musical Society and one of the first to write about the history of Scottish song and music (see Rieuwerts 2011: 24-5; Mackay, ODNB entry for William Tytler. http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27969?docPos=2. 26/5/14.)
It may be suggested that the ballads in the *Minstrelsy*’s romantic ballad section which are drawn from the Brown MS tend to embody a national, rather than a regional cultural memory, and that Scott was aware that they were to be found throughout rural areas of Lowland and North-East Scotland. Even Scott’s selection from the Brown ballads was ostensibly guided by locality, however, in that he apparently chose ballads from the collection which were also known in the Border region, and omitted those which “seemed to be the exclusive property of the bards of Angus and Aberdeenshire” (*MSB* 1802; 1: cvi). Scott’s statement evidently leaves some room to manoeuvre, and while there is little doubt of his intentions, it is perhaps significant that, with the exception of “The Gay Gosshawk”, none of the Brown ballads were collected by Laidlaw and Hogg in Selkirkshire during the preparations for the second edition. As noted in the previous chapter, the inclusion of these ballads in the collection marked not only a shift in locality from Roxburghshire to Selkirkshire, but also saw Scott carefully noting changes to his sources and including songs drawn from living sources which had no obvious reference to a specific locality. The notes to the ballads collected by Laidlaw and Hogg include many allusions to the oral tradition of Ettrick Forest, notably “The Young Tamlane” (MSB 44), “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow” (MSB 56), “The Lament of the Border Widow” (MSB 57), “The Duel of Wharton and Stewart” (MSB 61) “Lady Anne” (MSB 71), “Original Ballad of the Broom of Cowdenknows” (MSB 75), and “Lord Randal” (MSB 76). Scott noted that the ballad “The Duel of Wharton and Stewart”, for
example, “has been preserved by tradition in Ettrick forest”\textsuperscript{130} (MSB 1803; 3: 132), while “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow” “is a great favourite among the inhabitants of Ettrick Forest” (MSB 1803; 3: 72).

Although many of the \textit{Minstrelsy} ballads were moved between the historical, romantic and imitation sections during subsequent editions, the presentation of “such Border Ballads as may tend to illustrate the ancient state of the Southern Counties of Scotland,” as Scott described his collection to the Duke of Buccleuch in 1800 (Scott to Henry Scott, 19 Jun. 1800; \textit{SL} 1: 99) was to constitute the \textit{Minstrelsy’s} unique selling point. In the first intimation of the plans that would develop into the \textit{Minstrelsy}, as noted in the thesis introduction, Scott admitted that he had “…sometimes thought of forming [the ballads] into a small collection, adding to them such of acknowledged merit as have already seen the light but I am discouraged by the multitude of similar publications” (Scott to George Chalmers, 17 Feb. 1796; \textit{SL} 1: 43-44). Amid anxieties regarding the introduction of another ballad collection into the market, then, Scott’s own contribution to the sphere of antiquarian balladry would place a significant emphasis on regionality.

This local and regional emphasis was not, of course, merely a commercial selling point and may also be seen to reflect a culturally nationalistic turn inwards which corresponded to, and indeed almost certainly enhanced, Scott’s own deeply felt local attachments. As Millgate observes, “Scott did not sharply separate issues of scholarly debate from those of local feeling” at this stage (Millgate 1984: 12). Romantic conceptions of landscape and the phenomenological power of association also come into play within the

\textsuperscript{130} Hogg’s mother sang this ballad (see Hogg 2004 [1834]: 38).
Minstrelsy, whereby the experience of place, particularly landscape, was held to stir emotions, evoke memories and, frequently, inspire creativity. In Local Attachments: The Province of Poetry (2010), Fiona Stafford emphasises the poetic importance of points of intersection between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ influences, observing that Scott “became a poet when his roots crossed with his reading” (Stafford 2010: 137). Discussing the Minstrelsy alongside Wordsworth’s Lyrical Ballads, Stafford proposes that for Scott, as for Wordsworth, external influences brought about the need for reconnection with the ‘local’, and that such awareness “gave their [Scott’s and Wordsworth’s] own work qualities that distinguished it from the traditional culture to which it was so powerfully drawn […] Scott’s Minstrelsy demonstrated both inwardness with traditional poetry and an external perception of its importance” (Stafford 2010: 135-6). As both Stafford and Scott’s most recent biographer John Sutherland have emphasised, the influence of European, particularly German, literature should not be underestimated in this regard.131 The work of German pre-Romantic Sturm und Drang poets and dramatists captivated the attendees of the literary salons of Edinburgh in the late 18th century, and Scott’s encounter with this material fired him with enthusiasm for the German language at the same time as it sharpened his already keen interest in ballad poetry.132 Scott’s translations of Gottfried August Bürger’s poems “Lenore” and “Der Wilde Jäger” (translated by Scott as “William and Helen” and “The Chase”, respectively), invigorated Scott’s interest in the ballad genre and prompted him to turn back to the ballads and traditions of the Border region to which he himself felt deeply connected. In the “Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry”, Scott

131 See Stafford 2010: 137; also Sutherland 1995: 43.
132 Scott first heard of Bürger’s Lenore through reports of Anna Laetitia Barbauld’s recitation of this ballad at Dugald Stewart’s house, in the summer of 1793 or 1794. (See MSB 1833; 4: 56.)
harks back to his early experiments with German literature:

While universal curiosity was thus distinguishing the advancing taste for the German language and literature, the success of a very young student, in a juvenile publication, seemed to show that the prevailing taste in that country might be easily employed as a formidable auxiliary to renewing the spirit of our own… (MSB 1833; 4: 44).

Scott’s presentation of his own local attachments comes to the fore in his correspondence with Thomas Percy. As noted in the thesis introduction, Scott first wrote to Percy in October 1800 and outlined his own projected ballad collection, clearly announcing his own intention to follow in the footsteps of Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), so influential on Scott in his younger years. In this letter he also referred to his “long and early residence in the South of Scotland” (Scott to Percy, 6 Oct. 1800; SL 12: 168) as preparing him adequately for the task in hand. In a later letter, dated January 1801, Scott elaborated further on his own local knowledge, acquired both through leisure and applied scholarship:

… an early partiality to the tales of my country, and an intimate acquaintance with its wildest recesses, acquired partly in the course of country sports, and partly in pursuit of antiquarian knowledge will, I hope, enable me at least to preserve some of the most valuable traditions of the south of Scotland, both historical and romantic. (Scott to Percy, 11 Jan. 1801; SL 1: 108-9.)

Nor was the retrospective tone which Scott struck in presenting himself as a memory source limited to his correspondence. In the introduction to the *Minstrelsy*, Scott also aligned regional, generational memory with a personal past rooted within an area noted for its seclusion and remoteness. His sources, he explained, were located in “the South Highlands, where, in many instances, the
same families have occupied the same possessions for centuries. It is chiefly from this latter source that the editor has drawn his materials, most of which were collected many years ago, during his early youth.” (MSB 1802, 1: cii.)

**Memory and Association**

The examples above suggest that Scott consciously located his ballad collection in a secluded, antiquated landscape, placing importance upon becoming well acquainted with the physical topography as well as the historical heritage. Scott set great store by the benefits of travelling to and viscerally experiencing the ‘spirit’ of a place, connecting this to narrative inspiration (see Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 37). A passage in a letter to Anna Seward regarding the “Highland poem” identifies both the need to revive his own memories of the area, and to gather inspiration from the memories of local people:

> I laid aside my Highland poem. The truth is it would require a journey of some length into the country not only to refresh my faded or inaccurate recollection of the scenery; But also to pick up some of the traditions still floating in the memory of the inhabitants. (Scott to Anna Seward, 13 Jan. 1807; SL 1: 347)

Imagination, recollection and locality are integral features of the *Minstrelsy*, and are evident in the topographical aspect inherent in Scott’s own approach to antiquarianism. As archaeologist Stuart Piggott has noted: “he directed attention, in the manner of the topographer, to local and visual source material; abbeys, castles and ancient towns as well as ballads and folk tales, the immediate and

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133 This poem probably eventually became “The Lady of the Lake” after Scott returned to it in 1808, the same year as *Waverley* was begun. Peter Garside has presented convincing evidence that Scott started work on *Waverley* in 1808, rather than 1805 as stated by Lockhart. (See Garside 1986: 61-81.)
tangible relics of the past” (Piggott 1976: 129). As Garside (1977) and Ross (1983) have observed, Scott in his later life was evidently well acquainted with the aesthetic doctrine of the picturesque, particularly in relation to principles concerning associationism and the appreciation of scenery from an artistic viewpoint which had been developed by William Gilpin (1789) and Archibald Alison (1790).

Scott’s correspondence during the period surrounding the creation of the *Minstrelsy*, as well as the beginning of the *Memoir* in 1808, show the influence of these writers, who presented the concept of trains of thought led on by association. In a letter to Anna Seward in June, 1802, Scott mounted a defence of the Border ballad against Seward’s low opinion of the literary qualities of ballad poetry. The “peculiar charm” of locality, he maintains, may be linked to memory and association:

This little tale may serve for an introduction to some observations I have to offer upon our popular poetry […] Much of its peculiar charm is indeed, I believe, to be attributed solely to its locality. A very commonplace and obvious epithet, when applied to a scene which we have been accustomed to view with pleasure, recalls to us not merely the local scenery, but a thousand little nameless associations, which we are unable to separate or to define.

(Scott to Anna Seward, 29 Jun. 1802; SL 1: 146-147.)

In a further letter to Seward in 1806, Scott reflected that the poetry of Robert Southey

…seems to excell [sic] in seizing either those circumstances which give character to a Landscape or such as are so closely connected with them that

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134 Although he spent his middle years in Shropshire before returning to his native Edinburgh in 1800, Alison (1757-1839) belonged to the Edinburgh circle of common sense philosophers and was a lifelong friend of Dugald Stewart (1753-1828). The writings of Uvedale Price (1810) were also a later influence on Scott (see Chapter Seven).
the one being suggested to our imagination naturally & almost necessarily recalls the rest… (Scott to Anna Seward, 10 Apr. 1806; SL 1: 288.)

However, a degree of ambiguity surrounds Scott’s relationship with the picturesque, a concept which Garside, for example, has suggested “Scott often seems to stand well away from” (Garside 1977: 681). It would certainly appear that Scott drew a particular distinction between imaginative engagement with the scenes of the past, and an aesthetic interest in nature which was guided by an artistic perspective. In particular, Scott was dismissive of his own artistic skill, writing in his memoir of 1808:

I do not by any means infer that I was dead to the feeling of picturesque scenery; on the contrary few delighted more in its general effect. But I was unable with the eye of a painter to dissect the various parts of the scene, to comprehend how the one bore upon the other… (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 37.)

Scott went on to contrast his lack of artistic skill with his enthusiasm for “romantic scenery or what afforded me at least equal pleasure, the places which had been distinguished by remarkable historical events”, differentiating between “a sense of the picturesque in action and in scenery” (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 37), by which he measured the narrative potential of a scene, as opposed to its purely aesthetic qualities. However, Scott’s emphasis on the historicity of the landscape closely follows Gilpin’s suggestion in Observations, relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, that “traditional anecdotes, whether true, or fabled, add grandeur to a scene” (Gilpin 1789: 73). Describing his early travels in the Memoir, Scott recalled:
The romantic feelings which I have described as predominating in my mind, naturally rested upon and associated themselves with these grand features of the landscape around me; and the historical incidents, or traditional legends connected with many of them, gave to my admiration a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our father’s piety or splendour, became with me an insatiable passion, which, if circumstances had permitted, I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe. (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 28-29.)

Scott retained his sense of the “peculiar charm” of place throughout his life. Writing to Henry James Montagu-Scott\(^\text{135}\) in 1823, Scott made some suggestions concerning the education of Montagu-Scott’s son in history. Here he again reinforced the importance of association and experiencing the ‘spirit’ of a place:

I would visit as a party of pleasure remarkable scenes – talk over what had happend at such & such places – endeavour to guess or make him guess the manner in which the actors lookd and try to estimate the changes which must have taken place in the scenery around […] I dare say your Lordship remembers the humbug of the Prussian lecturer\(^\text{136}\) on memory who taught folks to remember what they had a mind by forming an association between the thing to be rememberd and some fantastic combination which bore an allusion to it. As usually happens in such cases the professor was a charlatan but his art had a deep foundation in human nature. For after the events which we have actually seen those which dwell deepest in our mind are such as are connected with scenes which we have visited… (Scott to Lord Montagu, 5 Oct. 1823; SL 8: 103-104.)

\(^{135}\) Son of Henry Scott, third Duke of Buccleuch.

\(^{136}\) This was Gregor von Feinaigle (1760-1819) who gave a demonstration of his mnemonic techniques in 1811 during a lecture tour of Scotland and England, including one in Edinburgh which Scott presumably attended. According to his biographer Terence Richardson, Feinaigle’s methods were based on the classical art of memory originally conceptualised by Cicero in *de Oraitore*, and involved the creation of sequences of images or patterns to aid recollection. A flamboyant showman who cultivated an arcane air of mystery, Feinaigle demonstrated his techniques by having orphan children on stage memorising complex sequences of numbers and dates. See Richardson, *ODNB* entry for Gregor von Feinagle (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9252. 18/6/14). Feinaigle was satirised by a number of contemporary literary figures: Byron, for example, refers to him in *Don Juan*, describing the intellectual prowess of Don Juan’s mother, Donna Inez:

> For her Feinagle’s were an useless art
> And he himself obliged to shut up shop – he
> Could never make a memory so fine as
> That which adorned the brain of Donna Inez. (Byron: *Don Juan* [1819]: Canto I, verse 11.)
Scott’s reference to the arts of memory, above, is lent a further intriguing layer in his use of the “log-book”, a memory aid which he describes in the *Memoir* as

...a sort of technical memory respecting the scenes I visited. Wherever I went I cut a piece of a branch from a tree – these constituted what I called my log-book and I intended to have a set of chessmen out of them, each having reference to the place where it was cut, as the kings from Falkland and Holy-Rood, the queens from Queen Mary’s yewtree at Crookstone, the bishops from abbeys or episcopal palaces, the knights from Baronial residences, the rooks from royal fortresses, and the pawns generally from places worthy of historical note. But this whimsical design I never carried into execution. (Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 37-38.)

F. A. Pottle has used this example to draw a parallel between the notched sticks and “a system of mnemonic devices” (Pottle 1969: 243). This is supported by the recollections of Robert Shortreed. In response to his son’s questioning surrounding Scott’s note-taking, or lack of it, Shortreed recalled:

We had neither pens, nor ink, nor paper. But we had *knives* and they served the turn just as weel, for we took bits o’ cutting wi’ them, frae a broom Cowe, or an aller, or a hazel-bush, or whatever else might be at hand, and on thae bits o’ stick (maybe tway or three inches lang they were) he made a variety o’ notches, and these were the only memoranda I ever saw him take or have, of any of the memorable spots he wished to preserve the recollection of, or any tradition connected wi’ them [...] I couldna think what he meant by this at first, and when I asked him what a’ thae marked sticks, were for, he said, “these are my log-book, Bob!”’ (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 61-62.)

A comparison may also be drawn between the “log-book” and a reference to bakers’ “nick-sticks” which appear in Scott’s accompanying notes to *The Antiquary* (1816), where he described the sticks as

[a] sort of tally generally used by bakers of the olden time in settling with their customers. Each family had its own nick-stick, and for each loaf as delivered a notch was made on the stick. Accounts in Exchequer, kept by
Regardless of exactly to what extent he used the notched sticks as memory aids, Scott was clearly aware of mnemonic systems which aided personal recollection, and this apprehension of the emotive power of association led him to set great store by the phenomenological experience of space.

**Sense of Place and the *Minstrelsy* Ballads**

The ‘Border’ ballads contained within the historical section of the *Minstrelsy* are grounded in place as much as they are in time, recounting violent tales of a past riven by family feuds, cattle reiving, and cross-border conflict. The invocation of place in the ballads is self-reflexive, the process involving the three main components of cultural memory: people, place and the past. While the roll-call of Border family names common to many ballads maintains recollections of ancestral connections over time, place is crucial to the construction of cultural memory on account of its continuity. Aleida Assmann sees the continuity of place as key to its memorial import: “not only do [places] stabilize and authenticate [cultural memory] by giving it a concrete setting, but they also embody continuity, because they outlast their artefacts.” (A. Assmann 2012: 282). Landscape can embody stability; however, it can also lend a sense of temporal depth, forming a visual representation of the distance of the present from the past. In a similar vein, the antiquarian concentration on ruins in the *Minstrelsy*’s commentary presents a series of stark contrasts between the landscape of past and present. This Romantic re-engagement with place as retainer of both collective and personal memory makes a significant contribution.
to the historical ballads as memory sites.

Of course, issues of memory and place are in no way confined to editorial interpretations. On the contrary, they are deeply woven into oral traditions. Keith Basso, whose research on the Western Apache tribe in Cibecue, Arizona, has demonstrated that Apache conceptions of morals, wisdom, and their culture’s history are entwined with the places they inhabit. ‘Sense of place’, Basso contends, is “one of the most basic dimensions of human experience – that close companion of heart and mind, often subdued yet potentially overwhelming” (Basso 1996: 106). Basso uses Heidegger’s concept of “dwelling” to explore this form of consciousness through which human beings observe and make sense of their geographical surroundings. Inherent in “dwelling” is the connection between people and place which is played out within multiple “lived relationships” (Basso 1996: 107). Furthermore, Basso notes that human connection to places is most often taken for granted until separation occurs, and that the perception of such relationships varies in intensity, from brief instants of barely perceived recollection to intensely charged moments of deeply resonant awareness. At such points, “the physical landscape becomes wedded to the landscape of the mind” (Basso 1996: 107).

The interplay between physical and mental landscapes and this phenomenon of intense awareness are aspects which appear in Scott’s own representation of recollection and place. He was well versed in the juxtaposition of objects and memories, recalling of his childhood encounter with Percy’s Reliques, “the tree is still in my recollection, beneath which I lay and first entered upon the enchanting perusal of Percy’s Reliques of Ancient Poetry” (MSB 1833; 4: 53). Recollecting an outing made during his youth in the introduction to the novel The
*Fair Maid of Perth* (1828), Scott describes the impression made on his memory by the view of Perth, looking north from the Wicks of Baiglie, around three miles south of Bridge of Earn. Strikingly, it is the memory itself to which Scott ascribes greatest importance: the memory of a scene which at the time scarcely seemed to inhabit reality:

I recollect pulling up the reins, without meaning to do so, and gazing on the scene before me as if I had been afraid it would shift, like those in a theatre, before I could distinctly observe its different parts, or convince myself that what I saw was real. Since that hour the recollection of that inimitable landscape has possessed the strongest influence over my mind, and retained its place as a memorable thing, while much that was influential on my own fortunes has fled from my recollection. (Scott 1999 [1828]: 13.)

The *Minstrelsy’s* editorial commentary also engages with the narrative potency of space, describing both past events and the visible remains of those events that have become part of the Borders landscape. Confronting the presentation of place in the *Minstrelsy* presents many challenges and choices. Even in the case of the relatively localised Border raid ballads, the action may be strung out over a number of areas, to say nothing of the naming of reiving families, as mentioned above. Behind the text presented in the collection, Scott’s editorial alterations and selections must also be taken into account. With these aspects in mind, the following section will focus on two key features of place in the *Minstrelsy*: the place-names in the ballad, and the ‘local explanations’ with which Scott frames them in the editorial commentary. Initially, it is therefore necessary to orientate the ballads briefly within the historical landscape of the 15th-16th centuries, in order to contextualise the following discussion of the historical ballad locations and Scott’s editorial standpoint.
The division of the marches dates back to 1240, when a treaty between Henry III of England and Alexander II of Scotland split the Anglo-Scottish border region into six administrative regions, or marches. This was a strategy expressly designed to control the area’s inhabitants. As shown in maps 4 and 5, below, these areas were divided along national as well as geographical lines, resulting in a Scottish and English side to the West, Middle and East marches (see MacDonald-Fraser 1971: 34-4). A warden appointed by the crown was responsible for each march.

Two areas, Liddesdale and a small strip of ground on the border known as the “debatable land”, became exceptions, and required special measures owing to the degree of lawlessness and unrest. Liddesdale was originally part of the Scottish Middle March, but became so lawless during the 16th century that it was deemed necessary to create a separate administrative area with its own sub-warden, the Keeper of Liddesdale (see Reed 1973: 41-43). In 1590, James VI knighted Walter Scott, known as ‘the Bauld Buccleuch’ (1565-1611), who was appointed Keeper of Liddesdale and Warden of the West Marches, and it was in this capacity that he commanded the rescue of Will Armstrong, or ‘Kinmont Willie’, in 1596. The debatable land ran for a length of around twelve miles along the west march, and was approximately four miles wide. National ownership of this area was historically disputed up until 1552, when the French ambassador was brought in to settle the matter (see MacDonald-Fraser 1971: 279). The larger share went to Scotland, and the ditch and bank called the Scots Dyke was created to mark the new Border. Liddesdale, dearly prized territory of the Armstrong clan, is most commonly represented in the Border raid ballads, and is also the most detailed locality in terms of place-names within the ballads.
Map 4. “A Platt of the Opposete Border of Scotland to ye West Marches of England, parts of Cumberland and Scotland including the Dabatable Land.” © National Library of Scotland (MS 6113, f. 267); used with permission.
Fulfilling their traditional function, local references in the ballads lend detail and indeed credence to the tales they relate, helping to strengthen associations and mediate recollections of the collective past within the community in which they are sung. However, the Minstrelsy presented these ballads to a readership likely to be as unfamiliar with the terrain as they were with the minutiae of Border history. The deeply rooted locality of the historical ballads is not only apparent in the events they narrate: the songs themselves bristle with local place-names. In this context, local, familial and ancestral references draw together social groups and reinforce collective senses of belonging, cohesiveness and ownership. This may be done through the naming of familiar landmarks and the ensuing recognition and reinforcement of property rights, but a further possibility regarding this interplay of place and memory in
the ballads is the mnemonic quality inherent in the folkloric naming of places. Although this feature is most distinctive in the listing of place-names in the prose and verse of the early Irish *dindsenchas* (‘the lore of places’), this important function of place-name poetry is also present in Scottish balladry.

Ballad characters who are mapped onto their territory and interwoven with the landscape that they command through their depredatory activities are a key feature of ballads such as “The Lads of Wamphray” (MSB 17) which Scott drew (unacknowledged) from the Glenriddell MS (vol. 11, f. 38). This ballad recounts a skirmish which took place in 1593 between the Johnston and the Crichton families, and begins by locating the characters firmly in their fiercely contested and defended territory:

'Twixt Girth-head and the Langwood end,
Lived the Galliard, and the Galliard’s men;
But and the lads of Leverhay,
That drove the Crichton’s gear away.

It is the lads of Lethenha’,
The greatest rogues amang them a’:
But and the lads of Stefenbiggin,
They broke the house in at the riggin.

The lads of Fingland, and Hellbeck-hill,
They were never for good but aye for ill;
'Twixt the Staywood-bush and Langside-hill,
They stealed the broked cow and the branded bull.

It is the lads of the Girth-head,
The deil’s in them for pride and greed;
For the Galliard, and the gay Galliard’s men,
They ne’er saw a horse but they made it their ain.

(MSB 1802; 1: 211-212.)

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137 See Johnston 2013: 28.
In the notes to “The Lads of Wamphray”, Scott again drew upon the Glenriddell MS in order to set the ballad in its geographical space, while suggesting that this is crucial to the understanding of the ballad itself:

Leverhay, Stefenbiggin, Girth-head, &c. are all situated in the parish of Wamphray. The Biddes-burn, where the skirmish took place betwixt the Johnstones and their pursuers, is a rivulet which takes its course among the mountains on the confines of Nithesdale and Annandale. The Wellpath is a pass by which the Johnstones were retreating to their fastnesses in Annandale. Ricklaw-holm is a place upon the Even water, which falls into the Annan, below Moffat. Wamphray-gate was in these days an ale-house. With these local explanations, it is hoped the following ballad will be easily understood. (MSB 1802; 1: 210.)

There is also evidence that Scott also used his editorial judgement to locate ballads in the Borders where possible. In his first letter to Currie in January 1801, Scott records his triumph at having found a local version of “Annan Water” (MSB 39)138 which he could relate to Annandale: “I have the old words which recount the death of a lover in attempting to cross not the Allan but the Annan water” (Scott to Currie, 8 Jan. 1801; in Carruthers 1996: 7). In the case of “Kinmont Willie” (MSB 9), Scott acknowledges that his editorial reach has extended to the place-names in the ballad, which describes the rescue of William Armstrong of Kinmont following his capture by the English deputy warden Thomas Sakelde in March 1596. The rescue party was headed by Walter Scott of Buccleuch (see above), and the whole ballad may in fact be read as a tribute to Scott’s own patron the Duke of Buccleuch, being one of the ballads which, as the Minstrelsy’s dedication promised, “celebrated the prowess, and

138Scott’s sources for the version of this ballad are unknown. It is possible that they came from Leyden, who also collected alternative verses to the ballad which were added to the 1803 edition (see MS 893, f. 20r). This version refers to “the Earl o’ Galla” but makes no reference to either Allan or Annan Water.
cheered the halls of his gallant ancestors.” In the introduction to the ballad, Scott acknowledges that he has changed the name of the river that flows by Carlisle to fit with the historical background:

This Ballad is preserved, by tradition, on the West Borders, but much mangled by reciters; so that some conjectural emendations have been absolutely necessary to render it intelligible. In particular, the *Eden* has been substituted for the *Eske* […] the latter name being inconsistent with geography. (MSB 1802; 1:125.)

The verse in question runs as follows:

Then on we held for Carlisle toun
And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we cross’d
The water was great and meikle of spait
But the nevir a horse nor man we lost.
(MSB 1802; 1: 131.)

On one level, this explanation appears simple enough. The Eden flows past Carlisle, the town in which Kinmont Willie is imprisoned. Scott’s admission is intriguing, however, as it is part of a conundrum revolving around the dynamics of editing place in the ballads. His acknowledgement of the alteration could be interpreted in two ways. Either he was aware of extant versions of the ballad not acknowledged in the *Minstrelsy* (and therefore wished to protect himself against allegations of undisclosed tampering) or the admission may be seen as a self-conscious endorsement of his own scholarship, emphasising both the antiquity of the collection’s source material and his own credentials as an editor (making sense of “mangled” traditional versions, and acknowledging editorial intervention). In either case, however, this example highlights the

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139MSB frontispiece.
importance Scott placed on setting the ballad in physical space.

A degree of uncertainty surrounds the origins of this ballad itself. Although the events described in the ballad more or less correspond to the history as we have it, Scott himself acknowledged no source for “Kinmont Willie”, and in the absence of manuscript evidence, doubts have historically been cast on its provenance. In Further Essays on Border Ballads, William Fitzwilliam Elliot concluded “firstly the whole ballad was based on the curious old rhymes written by Captain Walter Scot of Satchells in the middle of the 17th century, and secondly, that Sir Walter Scott composed the whole of it.” (Fitzwilliam Elliot 1910: viii). Andrew Lang speculated that “‘conjectural emendations’ was for Scott a way of saying ‘interpolations’” (Lang 1910: 11; 126-147), and he too thought that Scott probably drew upon Scot of Satchells’ A true history of the several honourable families of the right honourable name of Scot (1688). However, although Scott acknowledges having consulted Satchells liberally whilst editing the Minstrelsy (see for example MSB 1802; 1: lii), a comparison of Satchells’ verses with the Minstrelsy ballad throws little light on the issue. Although they relate the same event, Satchells’ own vivid version of Kinmont Willie’s rescue and the Minstrelsy ballad bear few textual similarities, with the possible exception of the following lines in verse thirty-eight of the ballad, in which the raiders bid an insolent farewell to Sir Henry Scroope, warden of the English West Marches:

   Kinmont said, when first here I did come,  
   Scroup engaged me to take leave of him;

140 Historical evidence surrounding Will Armstrong’s capture and rescue may be found in The Border Papers: Calendar of Letters and Papers Relating to the Affairs of the Borders of England and Scotland Preserved in Her Majesty’s Public Record Office, a 16th century record of affairs relating to the English and Scottish Border.
With a turning voice he did cry out;
Farewell, farewell, to my good Lord Scrup...
(Satchells, in Caw 1786: 17.)

In the *Minstrelsy* version, the exchange is somewhat embellished:

Then Red Rowan has hent him up,
The starkest man in Teviotdale –
‘Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
Till of my Lord Scroope I take farewell.

‘Farewell, farewell, my gude Lord Scroope!
My gude Lord Scroope, farewell!’ he cried –
‘I’ll pay you for my lodging mail,
When first we meet on the Border side.’
(MSB 1802: 1: 133.)

Scott discussed the verses from Satchells in the ballad’s introduction, in fact suggesting that Satchells’ verses may themselves have been influenced by popular ballads of the time rather than the other way round. “In many things”, Scott noted, “Satchells agrees with the ballads current in his time, from which, in all probability, he derived most of his information as to past events, and from which he sometimes pirates whole verses…” (MSB 1802: 1. 118).

The ballad scholar Malcolm G. Laws echoed Elliot’s opinion that Scott wrote the ballad, suggesting it had perhaps been “a form of practical joke” (Laws 1972: 168). There is little evidence of a joke, however; in fact, Scott took the authenticity of the *Minstrelsy* ballads seriously and was alert to the fact that suspicions might fall on him as a poet. As he wrote to Currie in 1801,

…it is however my intention to produce my authorities in as many cases as possible […] having been guilty of the sin of rhyming & being therefore a suspicious person I have no doubt that many people may be ready enough to suppose that I have interpolated my originals – an accusation which whenever it may be made, will I do [MS. torn here] be totally unmerited. (Scott to Currie, 30 Jul. 1801; SL 1: 120.)
It would appear that whatever form it came to him in and from whatever source, Scott heavily edited “Kinmont Willie”. His hand is evident in passages which contain dramatic rhetorical questions or extravagantly Romantic imagery, which Lang has aptly described as “cryingly modern and ‘Scott-esque’” (Lang 1910: 99). In verse five of “Kinmont Willie”, for example, Armstrong protests at his arrest by Lord Scroope’s men on a truce day:

My hands are tied, but my tongue is free  
And whae dare this deed avow?  
Or answer by the border law,  
Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch?  
(MSB 1802; 1: 127.

A letter written by Scott to Richard Heber in October 1800, however, further complicates the issue, as here Scott proudly reported his discovery of these flamboyant verses:

Some of the ballads I have recoverd are very fine indeed—What think you of this verse –  
O is my Basnet a widow's curch  
Or my lance a wand of the willow tree  
Or my arm a lady's lily hand  
That an English Lord shd. lightly me?  
(Scott to Heber, 19 Oct. 1800: SL 12: 173.)

In light of Scott’s respect for Heber and the fact that the two men frequently discussed Scott’s own poems, it seems unlikely that Scott would send one of his own imitations to Heber under the guise of a collected version. While it is tempting to agree with Henderson’s statement that “Scott practically admits that he has partly rewritten it” (Henderson 1902; 2: 57), the fact remains that we
cannot know the extent of Scott’s authorship of this ballad. In light of the above information we may suggest that Scott’s acknowledgement of the place-name change may be a way of creating support for the fabrication of large parts of “Kinmont Willie”, and at the same time, using the admission of editing in order to authenticate the rest of the ballad.

Artefacts situated within the memory spaces described by the *Minstrelsy* are also mapped onto the Borders landscape. The editorial commentary guides the reader to the scenes where the reported events had occurred, reinforcing or reinterpreting the landscape or artefact as a site of memory. The remaining ruins described in the *Minstrelsy* were presented as having withstood the test of time, even if they were now teetering on the brink of obliteration, as in the following example from the collection’s introduction:

Some rude monuments occur upon the borders, the memorial of ancient valour. Such is the cross at Langraw, on the banks of the Liddel, said to have been erected in memory of the Chief of the Armstrongs, murdered treacherously, by Lord Soulis, while feasting in Hermitage castle. Such also, a rude stone, now broken, and very much defaced, placed upon a mount on the lands of Haugh-head, near the junction of the Kale and Teviot. (*MSB* 1802; 1: lxvii-lxviii.)

The memorial import of such sites is frequently presented in terms of a symbiotic relationship between the land itself and the inhabitants of the area. In the introduction to the ballad “Johnie Armstrang” (*MSB* 3), Scott notes that “the common people of the high parts of Tiviotalde, Liddesdale, and the country adjacent, hold the memory of Johnie Armstrong in very high respect.” (*MSB* 1802; 1: 48.) As Scott continues, the memory of the notorious reiver’s execution is not only retained by those local to the area but by the very ground itself:
Johnie, with all his retinue, was accordingly hanged upon growing trees, at a place called Carlenrig Chapel, about ten miles above Hawick, on the high road to Langholm. The country people believe that, to manifest the injustice of the execution, the trees withered away. Armstrong and his follows were buried in a deserted church-yard, where their graves are still shewn. (MSB 1802; 1: 47.)

Figure 16. Stone near Teviothead cemetery, said to mark the ground where Armstrong and his men were buried, Feb. 2012. (Photograph: L. MacRae.)

As will be seen in the next chapter, Armstrong’s grave (Fig. 16) was a site to which Scott directed William and Dorothy Wordsworth in 1803, although they
failed to find it despite having received directions from Scott. In the case of the ballad “The Sang of the Outlaw Murray” (MSB 1), Scott mentions two possible sites for the Outlaw’s original tower: Newark Castle (later to become the setting for Scott’s *Lay of the Last Minstrel*) and the derelict tower at Hangingshaw, the ancestral seat of the Philiphough family. As Scott explains, a 19th century visitor to the spot must visualise the tower as well as the woods in which it once stood:

That tower has been totally demolished for many years. It stood in a romantic and solitary situation, on the classical banks of the River Yarrow. When the mountains around Hangingshaw were covered with the wild copse which constituted a Scottish forest, a more secure stronghold for an outlawed Baron can scarcely be imagined. (*MSB* 1802; 1: 3-4.)

Throughout the *Minstrelsy* the exact location of ruins and graves “still shewn”, as in the case of Armstrong’s grave, above, create a textual map of this region through which the past may be “read” by the informed onlooker. “Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead” (MSB 7) is one such ballad. As noted in Chapter Three, Scott had been acquainted with the tale of this ballad since hearing it from his grandmother at Sandyknowe. In 1796, the same year as Scott started to make plans for the *Minstrelsy*, Scott presented a manuscript copy of this ballad, entitled “The Raid of Ritter’sford” to his friend and benefactor Harriet Bruhl, the wife of Hugh Scott of Harden. By this time Hugh Scott had taken up the estate which included the farm of Sandyknowe and Smailholm Tower (discussed further on in this chapter) and this ballad is a monument to the family memory of the Scott clan, as it is the Scotts who are the heroes of the day. In other versions

142 The manuscript is now held by the National Library of Scotland (Acc 12712).
of this ballad, it is the Elliots that come to Telfer’s rescue, and as was seen in the previous chapter, the change in the *Minstresy* was apparently resented in certain quarters. Scott acknowledges this in the *Minstresy* (*MSB* 1802; 1: 91), but notes in the manuscript version of 1796:

> …The places mentioned in the course of the narrative are all well known and the memory of the principle [sic] Actors is preserved by family Tradition […] as I have the honour to be in [struck out: the fame of] some of these warriors I do but justice to their memory in communicating this record of their fame to those [struck out: whose still more & more dignified connection with them] who will probably be induced to set some value upon it from the more near & intimate connection which they have with its heroes… (NLS Acc 12712, f. 5).

This example shows how even before the *Minstresy* was published, Scott was presenting himself as “Border minstrel” in the way he would later mimic when dedicating the *Minstresy* to the Duke of Buccleuch.

The ballad’s verses trace a virtual map of the territory traversed by the ballad’s protagonist, as Jamie Telfer makes a frantic dash for help following a raid conducted by the Captain of Bewcastle and his men:

> Warn Wat o’ Harden, and his sons,  
> Wi’ them will Borthwick water ride;  
> Warn Gaudilands, and Allanhaugh,  
> And Gilmanscleugh, and Commonside.
>  
> Ride by the gate at Priesthaughswire,  
> And warn the Currors o’ the Lee;  
> As ye cum down the Hermitage Slack,  
> Warn doughty Willie o’ Gorrinberry.  
> (*MSB* 1802; 1: 85.)

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143 In 1802, Hogg wrote to Scott about this and other ballads known by his mother, noting that “Jamie Telfer differs in many particulars.” (Hogg to Scott, 30 Jun. 1802, in Hughes 2004; 1: 15.) See also Elliot 1910: 180-184.

144 Border law sanctioned the ‘hot trod’, which meant that following a raid the injured party could legally pursue the perpetrators, across the Border if need be, and reclaim their stolen goods by any means within six days of a raid. (See MacDonald-Fraser 1971: 114-121.)
In the ballad manuscript Scott gifted to Bruhl, Scott notes that “the fair Dodhead is a lonely place on the borders of Selkirkshire where there are still the remains of a Peel or Tower” (NLS Acc 12712, f. 8), and this is echoed in the Minstrelsy, where Scott locates the Dodhead “in Selkirkshire, near Singlee, where there are still the vestiges of an old tower” (MSB 1802; 1: 91).

In providing such “local explanations”, Scott saw his role as editor not simply to provide local descriptions and settings to authenticate the ballad’s historical and topographical background, but also to awake the imaginative associations in the mind of the reader. The editorial commentary, which promotes a Borders landscape suffused with the visible remains of the past, also echoes Scott’s growing preoccupation with Romantic conceptions of place, memory and association.

**Places and the Imitation Ballads**

An anecdote from J. B. Sawrey Morritt’s anecdote concerning Scott and the creation of the narrative poem *Rokeby* (1813) at Morritt’s family seat in Yorkshire is both an example of the importance Scott placed on the inspiration of space and a wry observation of his unashamedly creative use of it. As Morritt recalled of Scott’s visit in 1812:

…”[Scott] said, “local names and peculiarities make a fictitious story look so much better in the face.” In fact, he was but half satisfied with the most beautiful scenery when he could not connect with it some local

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145 See Veitch (1893), Fitzwilliam-Elliot (1906) and Lang (1907) for a hearty dispute about the exact route taken by Jamie Telfer in ‘raising the water’, based on the place-names in the ballad.

146 Jacob Bacon Sawrey Morritt (1771-1843) was introduced to Scott by Lady Louisa Stuart (see Scott to Stuart, 16 Jun. 1808; SL 2: 72). Scott entertained Morritt and his wife at Ashiestiel in September 1808 (see SL 2: 92) and the two men developed a close friendship. Scott dedicated “Rokeby” (1813) to Morritt, having visited the estate in order to gather inspiration for the poem in 1812 as discussed in the main text, above.
legend, and when I was forced sometimes to confess, with the Knife-
grinder, ‘Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir’— he would
laugh, and say, ‘then let us make one – nothing so easy as to make a
tradition. (Morritt, in Lockhart 1902; 4: 18-19.)

This anecdote resounds throughout Scott’s legacy, and is particularly pertinent in
the case of the Minstrelsy’s imitation ballads and their connections of place to
historical, or imaginary, events. The imitation ballad section of 1802 consisted of
four poems, two by Scott and two by Leyden. In the years that followed, this
section became a platform on which Scott could honour friends and
 correspondents in the collection. Of the four imitation ballads contained within
the 1802 edition of the Minstrelsy, two are set in Roxburghshire. Scott
commemorated Smailholm Tower, which had overshadowed the farm of
Sandyknowe, by making it the setting for “The Eve of St John” (MSB 49), while
Leyden chose Hermitage Castle, situated between Newcastleton and Hawick, as
a backdrop for both “Lord Soulis” (MSB 50) and “The Cout of Keeldar” (MSB 51). The two sites of Hermitage and Smailholm were highly significant for Scott
due to their personal and collective associations. The peel tower of Smailholm
reflected Scott’s familial and ancestral ties, while the austere castle of Hermitage
held numerous historical associations and had also been a key site visited by
Scott and Shortreed during the Liddesdale expeditions of the 1790s, as discussed
in Chapter Four.

“The Eve of St John”, along with the fourth, non-local imitation ballad
“Glenfinlas or Lord Ronald’s Coronach” (MSB 52), which Scott set in the
Trossachs near Loch Katrine, were both originally published in Monk’s Tales of
Wonder (1800). As he wrote to Currie in 1801, Scott felt traditional customs and

\[147^\text{Morritt refers to George Canning’s satirical poem, “The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder”, first published in The Anti-Jacobin, 1797.}\]
belief provided an important basis to his modern creations: “I think the Marvellous in poetry is ill-timed & disgusting when not managed with moderation & ingrafted upon some circumstance of popular tradition or belief which sometimes can give even to the improbable an air of something like probability.” (Scott to Currie, 30 Jul. 1801; SL 1: 121.) Scott initially claimed that both ballads were inspired by Gaelic tradition.

“He Glenfinlas” is based on a tale type common to the Scottish Gaelic tradition, in which hunters sheltering overnight in a remote bothy or shieling hut are attacked by monstrous hags. Scott acknowledged “Glenfinlas” as being somewhat out of place in the Minstrelsy; as he wrote to Morritt in 1809, acknowledging receipt of “The Curse of Moy” (MSB 95; see below), “I intend to couple it [The Curse of Moy] with Glenfinlas in the third volume of the Border Ballads. They have neither of them much to [do] there but we must trust their contents will be their best apology.” (Scott to Morritt, 17 Aug. 1809; SL 2: 24.)

In the case of “The Eve of St John”, Scott asserted that the events were “founded upon a well known Irish tradition” (MSB 1802; 2; 310). However, he later acknowledged in the “Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad” that “the incident, except the hints alluded to in the marginal notes, are entirely imaginative, but the scene was that of my early childhood.” (MSB 1833; 4: 67-8.) In Scott’s ballad, the Baron of Smailholm returns to his tower after killing his wife’s lover but finds that the dead man’s ghost has already visited. The setting of “The Eve of St John” was a highly evocative one for Scott, as the remains of

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148 “Àirigh na h-Aon Oidhche” (The Shieling of the One Night) is one common version of this tale, as is “Cù Dubh Mhic a’ Phi” (MacPhee’s Black Dog). Numerous versions of these tales are stored in the School of Scottish Studies Archives at the University of Edinburgh. Most of these were recorded in the Highlands and Western Isles during the mid-20th century. (See for example recordings SA1963.075; SA1963.007.) The tales have also appeared in print (Bruford & MacDonald 1994: 318-19; Campbell 1885: 262-73).
the 15th century peel tower overshadowed his grandparents’ farm at Sandyknowe. Discussing the location of Smailholm in the ballad’s editorial commentary, Scott was able to reference his relation, benefactor and friend Hugh Scott of Harden, from whose father Robert Scott, Scott’s grandfather, had rented the farm of Sandyknowe (see Scott, in Hewitt 1981: 4). Having described the tower’s situation “among a cluster of wild rocks called Sandiknow-Crags, the property of Hugh Scott, Esq. of Harden” (MSB 1802; 2; 310), Scott noted his own connection to the tower: “[t]his ancient fortress and its vicinity formed the scene of the editor's infancy, and seemed to claim from him this attempt to celebrate them in a Border tale” (MSB 1802; 2; 310). Later, discussing the ballad in the “Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad”, Scott portrays Harden as having played an even more pivotal role in the creation of this ballad:

Some idle persons had of late years, during the proprietor’s absence, torn the iron-grated door of Smallholm Tower [sic] from its hinges, and thrown it down the rock. I was an earnest suitor to my friend and kinsman, Mr. Scott of Harden, already mentioned, that the dilapidation might be put a stop to, and the mischief repaired. This was readily promised, on condition that I should make a ballad, of which the scene should lie at Smallholm Tower, and among the crags where it is situated. (MSB 1833; 4: 67-8.)

Like Burns’s “Tam o’ Shanter”, written especially to ensure that Alloway’s Auld Kirk was commemorated in the second volume of Francis Grose’s Antiquities of Scotland (1791), “The Eve of St John” was apparently written in order to preserve Smailholm Tower, and with it, the memorial significance that the tower held for Scott. It comes as little surprise that Scott chose Smailholm as one of the self-referential Minstrelsy sites to be represented by the painter William Mallord Turner in The Poetical Works, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven. In a letter
to Eliza Thurburn in 1830, Scott noted his custom of making an annual expedition to a place which not only held personal memories of his own childhood, but was also the site of generational memories concerning the Scott’s family history:

In the beginning of a literary career, which has now been a busy one, I pitched upon Smailhome tower and the crags on which it stands for the scene of a ghost ballad called "The Eve of St. John," and I make a point of making a pilgrimage once a year to the place, in memory of the good people who are gone. (Scott to Eliza Thurburn, 7 Jul. 1830; SL 11: 370.)

The following extract is of particular interest because it contains a rare reference to Scott’s father as a source of family lore, and indicates that the tower was inhabited during the first decades of the 18th century:

I have heard my father say that the old tower was inhabited, when he was a child, by an old dowager lady who wore deep mourning, and used to stuff him and his brothers and sisters with sweetmeats… (Scott to Eliza Thurburn, 7 Jul. 1830; SL 11: 370).

Like Smailholm Tower, Hermitage Castle, situated between Newcastleton and Hawick in Liddesdale, was a site which had a mixture of personal and historical connections for Scott. In *Border Antiquities* (1814), Scott described this grim, grey stronghold in terms of both its historical connections and its setting in the Liddesdale landscape:

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149 Eliza Thurburn was the wife of John Thurburn of Murtle, Aberdeenshire. She had first written to Scott on 17 Jun. 1830 for further information about the property. Family letters had indicated that her grandfather-in-law had once been in possession of Smailholm Tower, and had known Scott’s grandfather Robert Scott. See SL 11: 369 (footnote).

150 Grierson’s source for this letter was *The Thurburns* (1864); he gives the date of this letter as c. 20-21 Jun. 1830. Above I have used the revised date from the Millgate Union Catalogue, in which Millgate has sourced the original letter.
The darksome strength and retired situation of Hermitage Castle made it long a chosen hold of the Earls of Douglas, and the succeeding branch of the house of Angus, who appear to have fortified it, with little attention indeed to architectural beauty, but so as greatly to improve the natural advantages of its wild sequestered situation… (Scott 1814: 1, lix).

It was Leyden, however, who would memorialise the castle in “The Cout of Keeldar” (MSB 50) and “Lord Soulis” (MSB 51). In October 1800, Scott wrote to Heber, letting him know that Leyden had completed work on the two poems:

He has made two very good Ballads indeed—One on the subject of Keeldar which I think was begun before you left Caledonia, the other upon the boiling of Lord Soulis the Liddesdale tyrant, whom he has dishd up in great stile [sic] —no Irish stew was ever equal to him… (Scott to Heber, 19 Oct. 1800; SL 12: 172.)

Leyden’s poems “Lord Soulis” and “The Cout of Keeldar” detail the fabled end of two notable Borders characters of the 13th century with close connections to Hermitage Castle. Accounts from oral tradition concerning the death of Soulis himself, when he was boiled in lead in a large cauldron near Hawick, inspired Leyden’s eponymous ballad “Lord Soulis”. The de Soulis family, as Leyden notes in the introduction to this ballad, were connected to the castle of Hermitage during the 13th and 14th centuries. They were a powerful family who were involved in the Wars of Independence. William de Soulis (c. 1280-1320) was apparently part of an English-inspired plot to kill Robert the Bruce; following the failure of this plot he was imprisoned and died in Dumbarton Castle (see Brown 2005: 24). However, as Leyden recounts, “[L]ocal tradition […] more faithful to the popular sentiment than history, has recorded the character of their chief […] he is represented as a cruel tyrant and sorcerer”
Leyden’s introduction to the ballad invokes a scene of supernatural and gothic terror:

The castle of Hermitage, unable to support the load of iniquity, which had been long accumulating within its walls, is supposed to have partly sunk beneath the ground; and its ruins are still regarded by the peasants with peculiar aversion and terror. Into this chamber, which is really the dungeon of the castle, the peasant is afraid to look; for such is the active malignity of its inmate, that a willow, inserted at the chinks of the door, is found peeled, or stripped of its bark, when drawn back. (MSB 1802; 2; 359.)

Leyden also gave a detailed description the situation of the Nine-Stane rig (Fig. 17), where Lord Soulis was said to have been put to death in detail:

The Nine-stane Rig, where Lord Soulis was boiled, is a declivity, about one mile in breadth, and four in length, descending upon the water of Hermitage, from the range of hills which separates Liddesdale and Teviotdale. It derives its name from one of those circles of large stones, which are termed Druidical, nine of which remained to a late period. Five of these stones are still visible; and two are particularly pointed out, as those which supported the iron bar upon which the fatal cauldron was suspended. (MSB 1802; 2; 334.)

This is echoed within the ballad itself, where Leyden evokes the phenomenon we have previously come across in relation to the execution of Johnie Armstrong, above, where the site of the event remains bare of plant life:

At the Skelf-hill, the cauldron still,
The men of Liddesdale can shew;
And on the spot where they boiled the pot,
The spreat* and the deer-hair** ne’er shall grow.151

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151 Leyden’s footnotes: *Spreat. – The spreat is a species of water-rush. ** Deer-hair. – The deer-hair is a coarse species of pointed grass, which in May bears a very minute, but beautiful yellow flower. (MSB 1802; 2; 349.)
Within the *Minstrelsy* editions of 1803, 1806 and 1810, a wider selection of imitation ballads were included. As well as including one more Leyden poem, “The Mermaid” (MSB 77) and three more poems by Scott in the second edition of 1803 (“Cadyow-Castle” [MSB 84], “The Gray Brother” [MSB 85] and “War song of Edinburgh Light Dragoons” [MSB 86]), Scott began to use the imitation ballad section to acknowledge those with whom he had corresponded on literary matters since the initial preparation of the collection. Matthew Gregory Lewis’s poem “Sir Agilthorn” (MSB 80) appeared in the second edition, as did several poems by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe. As noted in Chapter Five, Sharpe had first made contact with Scott on 5 August 1802, sending him “The Douglas Tragedy”

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152 A copy of this licence may be viewed at http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/ 25.2.14.
and “The Twa Corbies”. In his next letter of 27 August, Sharpe enclosed versions of “Mary Hamilton” (MSB 69) and “Lady Anne” (MSB 71) which Scott published in the second edition of 1803 (MSB 1803; 2: 163-173 and MSB 1803; 2: 259-63 respectively). In this letter Sharpe encourages Scott to visit him at Hoddom castle: “Hoddam, [sic] as a specimen of a border fortress, is well worth the observation of an antiquary, and I am certain that you would admire the mysterious Tower of Repentance, which stands on a hill near the castle.” (Sharpe to Scott, 27 Aug. 1802, in Allardyce 1888; 1: 138.) Having thus introduced Scott to the “mysterious tower”, Sharpe also enclosed a ballad of his own composition set within its walls: “The Lord Herries his Complaint: A Fragment” (MSB 78), in which Lord Herries repents the death of twelve prisoners whom he murdered on board his boat returning from an English raid. Scott was eager to take up Sharpe’s composition, adding that he placed particular value on the local descriptions “calculated to give to fiction itself the charms of truth or at least of vraisemblance” (Scott to Sharpe, 8 Sep. 1802; SL 1: 155). In a sense, the Tower of Repentance, without an attached tradition, was waiting for the ‘local explanation’ provided by Sharpe.

Scott included “The Lord Herries his Complaint” in the expanded imitation section of 1803, as well as a second composition by Sharpe, “The Murder of Caerlaveroc” (MSB 79) in which Sharpe used the ballad form to tell the historical tale of the death of his ancestor Roger Kirkpatrick at the hands of James of Lindsay in 1357. Despite her misgivings concerning the ballad genre, the poet Anna Seward contributed “Rich Auld Willie’s Farewell” (MSB 81), a poem which “concerns a freebooter taken by the English in a Border Battle, and

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153 A third ballad, “Lady Dysmal” was rejected by Scott due to “the extreme degradation of her Liaison” (see Scott to Sharpe, 8 Sep. 1802; SL 1: 156).
condemned to be executed” (MSB 1803; 3: 352). A poem entitled “The Water Kelpie”, written by Dr John Jamieson (mentioned in Chapter Four) concentrated on a mythical creature in an identifiable place. In the poem’s introduction, Scott explained, “[a]s the poem is descriptive of the superstitions of the vulgar, in the county of Angus, the scene is laid on the banks of South Esk, near the castle of Inverquharity, about five miles north from Forfar.” (MSB 1803; 3: 355.) The inclusion of the poem also provided the opportunity for Scott to announce “that Dr Jamieson is about to publish a complete Dictionary of the Scottish Dialect” (MSB 1803; 3: 355), and to whet the Minstrelsy’s readers for this forthcoming publication further, a capacious glossary of Scots words was attached to “The Water Kelpie” as an endnote.

In 1806, Scott added three ballads from the pen of John Marriott (1780-1825), a Leicestershire-born poet and Church of England clergyman.154 From 1804-1807 Marriott held the post of tutor to George Henry, son of Charles Montagu-Scott, fourth Duke of Buccleuch, at which time his friendship with Scott begun. Scott included Marriot’s poems “The Feast of Spurs” (MSB 88), “On a Visit Paid to the Ruins of Melrose Abbey” (MSB 89) and “Archie Armstrong’s Aith” (MSB 88) in the 1806 edition of the Minstrelsy, and two years later also dedicated the introduction to Canto II of Marmion to Marriott.

Although Border settings prevail in the imitation ballads, the number of poems located in the Highlands also indicate the way in which the enthusiasm for the Ossian poems ensured Highland lore continued to be a popular theme, even as Scott carved out a new context for the history of the Borders. One of these poems was “Ellandonan Castle” (MSB 83) written by Colin Mackenzie of

Portmore (1770-1830), an Edinburgh advocate and school friend of Scott’s. Another was “The Curse of Moy” by J. B. Morritt (see above) which was added in 1810, and set at Moy Hall, Inverness (not to be confused with Moy Castle in Mull).

Although these ‘imitation’ ballads were acknowledged as such in the *Minstrelsy*, the antiquarian Robert Surtees (1779-1834) was the unacknowledged author of at least three ballads which Scott included in the historical section of the 1810 edition: “Lord Ewrie” (MSB 91), “The Death of Featherstonehaugh” (MSB 92) and “Barthram’s Dirge” (MSB 94). Surtees, whom Scott mistakenly named “Richard” when first introducing him in the introduction to “Lord Ewrie”, attributed these ballads to various plausible-sounding sources in Northumbria, namely elderly local women. “Lord Ewrie” had apparently been taken down “from the recitation of Rose Smith, of Bishop Middleham, a woman aged upwards of ninety-one, whose husband’s father and two brothers were killed in the affair of 1715” (*MSB* 1810; 1: 132). Surtees claimed to have heard “The Death of Featherstonehaugh” sung by “a woman eighty years of age, mother of one of the miners in Alston-Moor [...] when she was a girl, it used to be sung at merry-making, ‘till the roof rang again’” (*MSB* 1810: 1: 233). “Barthram’s Dirge”, finally, “was taken down by Mr. Surtees, from the recitation of Anne Douglas, an old woman, who weeded in his garden.” (*MSB* 1810; 1: 265). Although Surtees never admitted to it during his lifetime, he had in fact written these three ballads himself, as copies of the works in progress were found amongst his papers after his death (see Taylor 1852: 25). Given Scott’s knowledge of ballads it does seem unlikely that he was entirely taken in with the creations, which Surtees’ biographer Alan Bell assigns to the former’s particular
sense of humour. Scott enjoyed corresponding with Surtees and was evidently pleased with the apparent historicity of the ballads. However, in the case of “The Death of Featherstonehaugh” (MSB 92), Scott’s comment to Surtees that his “notes upon the parties concerned give it all the interest of authenticity” (Scott to Surtees, 17 Dec. 1806; SL 1: 342) should not necessarily be interpreted as an indication that he had been taken in by Surtees’ creations.

Conclusions

This chapter has sought to examine the presentation of place within the Minstrelsy, showing the interplay of personal recollections, the memorial power of association and the self-representative use to which such sites of memory were put in Scott’s collection. The importance Scott placed upon locality, and his use of locality as an editing technique, shows place in the Minstrelsy to be a dynamic entity, with a range of uses from the legitimising and historicising to the imaginative. Scott’s editorial interaction with place in the Minstrelsy invested the imagined landscape of the Scottish Borders with a peculiar cultural and emotional power that reached beyond the Romantic aesthetic and engaged with the mediation of cultural memory. Engaging with topographical description and the lore of places as well as recognised historical sources, the editorial paratext weaves a further layer of cultural memory around the ballads. In these notes, aspects of the ballads’ locality are both mirrored and augmented, while the Borders landscape and its historical artefacts are invested with mnemonic power in their presentation as palpable survivals alongside the ballads and their surrounding lore. Providing a textual tour of historical sites, Scott’s editorial

notes seek both to explain the cultural beliefs contained within the ballads and to evoke a strong sense of place and the past. As evidenced by the growing number of imitation ballads in the collection, as well as the case of Robert Surtees’ dubious ‘forgeries’, Scott’s concern with authenticity at the beginning of his endeavour (which, as indicated by the case of “Auld Maitland” as well as by his own treatment of certain ballads, was never the most rigorous) may have dwindled by the time Surtees’ ballads were printed in the fourth edition of 1810. Scott had grown in confidence, and he was in any case moving on with other, fictional endeavours.

In *Henry VI*, Shakespeare has Smith the Weaver comically ‘verify’ the rebel Jack Cade’s parentage through the existence of the chimney his father built: “Sir, he made a chimney in my father’s house, and the bricks are alive at this day to testify it; therefore deny it not.” (Shakespeare, *Henry VI*. Part 2, act 4, scene 2.) Place and its artefacts are also brought to the fore as providing authentication of the past in the *Minstrelsy*. The representation of place is also a crucial component in Scott’s curation of the ballads’ memorial import, in an area where people and places portrayed in the ballads informed the collective imagination with regard to the region’s landscape and its past events. On the publication of the collection, these “local explanations” were brought to a wider audience, with the result that both the Borders landscape and its songs became self-perpetuating sites of memory through which the past could be re-imagined. Scott’s role as Border guide in showing visitors these sites in the years following the publication of the *Minstrelsy* will be examined more closely in the following chapter.
Chapter 7

“That Storied Vicinity”: Sites of Memory and Remediation

Introduction

So far we have discussed Scott’s role as a mediator in creating the *Minstrelsy*. The concept of remediation is useful in considering the centrality of the ballad collection not only to Scott’s portrayal of Border scenery and history but also to the fresh interest he generated in preserving the lore of the area. The publication of the *Minstrelsy* introduced the ballads and their historical context to a reading public who would be expected neither to be conversant with the region nor with its traditions. To many of these readers, the collection came to define both the ballads and the region itself. In this way, the *Minstrelsy* may be seen as playing a key role in the ‘remediation’ of cultural memory surrounding the ballads and the Border region. Erll and Rigney (2012) have used the term ‘remediation’ to explore ways in which sites of memory are kept in circulation, through successive acts of representation. This reinvestment process is essential to the maintenance of sites of memory, yet also subjects those sites to continual modification (see Erll, in Erll and Rigney 2012: 131).

Scott’s influence in this regard was perceived with a degree of mild irritation in certain quarters. Discussing the content of “Blackwood’s Magazine” in 1817, Thomas Carlyle observed that:

> It is curious too [*sic*] observe the importance which the writings of Walter Scott have conferred on every thing pertaining the Border […] Not a
beldame, in the Merse, can plant her cabbages – nor a tinker solder his kettle, but it must be forthwith communicated to the public in Blackwoods or the Scots Magazine. (Thomas Carlyle to James Johnston, 20 Nov. 1817, in Sanders and Fielding, 1970; 1: 116.)

It is worth pointing out, however, that Carlyle himself could not resist coupling his own local knowledge with the remarks above: “I marvel that they have not some correspondent in the West marches to transmit them intelligence about the spoon-men of Hightae, and the visions of Madam Peel. The dead-lights ‘gawn luntin by’ would be a rare morsel for them”156 (Thomas Carlyle to James Johnston, 20 Nov. 1817, in Sanders and Fielding 1970; 1: 116).

As we have seen in earlier chapters, Scott envisaged his work as an attempt to preserve the vestiges of a tradition which was fading from the collective memory of the region. To those who had pre-existing knowledge of the traditions of the area, Scott’s presentation of the collection’s ballad material alongside a comprehensive editorial commentary stimulated a concern about accuracy and representation. We have seen a hint of this phenomenon in Chapter Five, where Laidlaw voiced his doubts about the reliability of Dr John Elliot’s information, but supported that provided by Thomas Beattie. Using selected reminiscences written by those who visited the Borders during Scott’s lifetime, this chapter considers the influence of the Minstrelsy ballads on wider perceptions of the Borders outwith the region’s physical boundaries. As Garside has observed, Scott’s awareness of the tendency of nostalgia to lend a rosy tint to a scene may be demonstrated in his discussion of the Highland system of

156 The “spoonmen” of Hightae, in Lochmaben, were well-known tin-smiths. Many of them were Kennedys; it is likely that the John Kennedy mentioned by Laidlaw in Chapter 5 was one such “spoonman”. “Madam Peel” of Ecclefechan had a dream where she saw dead-lights, thought to be an omen of impending death (see Norton 1886: 65).
clanship in *Tales of a Grandfather*, in which Scott compares nostalgia for the old order to a Highland landscape on a beautiful summer evening:

On such occasion, the distant hills, lakes, woods, and precipices, are touched by a brilliancy of the atmosphere with a glow of beauty which is not properly their own, and it requires an exertion to recall to our mind the desolate, barren, and wild character, which properly belong to the objects which we look upon. (Scott, in Garside 1977: 670.)

The austerity of the Border landscape has long been remarked upon by travellers and writers. Writing in 1715, the physician and poet Alexander Pennecuik was distinctly unimpressed by the hills rising above the Yarrow Valley, describing them as “black, *Craigie, of a Melancoly Aspect, with Deep and horrid Precipies* [sic], a wearisome and Comfortless piece of way for travellers” (Pennecuik 1715: 3; original italics). In the 20th century, George MacDonald-Fraser wrote that the region “contains some of the loveliest and some of the bleakest country in the British Isles” (MacDonald-Fraser 1971: 33).

As Scott’s renown grew in the years that followed the collection’s publication, visitors from outside the region who were familiar with the *Minstrelsy* ballads and Scott’s later work were unanimous in agreeing about the area’s stark scenery. Whether they found loveliness amongst the barren hills was, as will be shown below, a matter largely directed by their familiarity with Scott, in person as well as in his works.

As early as the autumn of 1793, Scott was offering his services as a guide in Border territory. If Edinburgh was the ‘Athens of the North’, the Border territory just south of the city had its fair share of ancient relics, and the importance to Scott of local knowledge in connecting the sites and the ballads is clear in a letter to his friend Patrick Murray:
...I have been in weekly hopes of hearing of your arrival in the Merse, and have been qualifying myself by constant excursions to be your Border Cicerone. As the facetious Linton\textsuperscript{157} will no doubt make one of your party, I have got by heart for his amusement a reasonable number of Border ballads, most of them a little longer than Chevy Chase, which I intend to throw in at intervals, just by way of securing my share in the conversation. As for you, as I know your picturesque turn, I can be in this country at no loss how to cater for your entertainment [...] for antiquities, it is true we have got no temples or heathenish fanes to show; but if substantial old castles and ruined abbeys will serve in their stead, they are to be found in abundance. (Scott to Patrick Murray, 13 Sep. 1793; \textit{SL} 1: 27.)

From Scott’s letter we get the sense that he took a certain pride in eschewing the conventional European sightseeing in favour of an experience closer to home, yet a world away from the cramped and bustling streets of Edinburgh. Towards the end of his life, Scott urged the poet Samuel Rogers\textsuperscript{158} to visit him at Abbotsford, in order that he might show Rogers “places which though not very romantic in landscape every valley has its battle and every stream its song.” (Scott to Samuel Rogers, 15 Jan. 1831; \textit{SL} 11: 461.). As will be shown below, this imaginative transformation is an important component of the term “classic ground” which is referred to in many of the examples.

As discussed at the beginning of Chapter Six, the associative dynamic of the picturesque tradition has an important link to individual and collective remembering in this context. The following recollections of reactions to the landscapes of the Borders should be contextualised by the tendency of writers and travellers of the early Romantic era to place increasing significance on the cultural value of a landscape overlaid with a rich tapestry of historical and 

\textsuperscript{157} Scott’s friend Adam Ferguson (1771-1855).

\textsuperscript{158} Samuel Rogers (1763-1855); English poet, author of the poem \textit{The Pleasures of Memory} (1792) which explores the “associating principle” of memory.
literary associations. Such images and narratives both enrich and perpetuate the memory culture inspired by the *Minstrelsy*’s ballads and editorial commentary.

The influence of Scott’s poems, particularly “The Lay of the Last Minstrel” (1805) and “Marmion” (1808) contributed to the increase in attention paid to the Borders in literary circles during this early period. As J. H. Alexander has noted, “from 1805 onwards tourists materialised in droves with the poems in their pockets if not in their heads” (Alexander 1983: 31). However, an event such as the Wordsworths’ first visit to Scott in 1803 shows that the *Minstrelsy* both prepared the ground from which the poems grew and also engaged with the memory cultures surrounding the ballads themselves. Although Scott’s fame as poet, author and public figure drew visitors from all over Europe to his home at Abbotsford, the following examples have been selected due to their specific connection to Border lore and the *Minstrelsy* ballads. They are all retrospective accounts which emphasise the centrality of individual semantic memories in the search for meaning in landscape and scenery. They also provide examples of Scott’s perpetuation of memory spaces which he originally secured in the *Minstrelsy*, as discussed in the previous chapter. A prevailing theme running through the recollections below is the associative values of landscape. Scott’s visitors consistently contrasted the barrenness of the land itself, which contradicted conventional theories of the picturesque, with the layer of cultural memories which belied visitors’ initial perceptions of the bare landscapes of the region.

The first text to be considered is Dorothy Wordsworth’s memoir in which she recollects the Scottish tour she and her brother William made in 1803, during

159 “The Lay of the Last Minstrel” was originally intended for inclusion in the *Minstrelsy* (see Scott to Anna Seward, 30 Nov. 1802; *SL* 1: 166).
which time they visited Scott at Lasswade. The second is the account of Washington Irving, who paid Scott a visit at Abbotsford in 1817, the same year as Carlyle’s comments, above. Over the course of the fourteen years between the Wordsworths’ first visit and that of Irving’s, Scott’s circumstances had changed dramatically. Despite this fact, however, the Border ballads and their setting may be seen to have played a key role in Scott’s interpretation of the area, and his presentation of the region’s history to visitors. In turn, the travellers’ responses to the landscape and history were tempered by their own preconceptions due to their knowledge of the oral and literary traditions of the Borders. Following on from these accounts, examples from other commentators including Henry Cockburn and Elizabeth Grant further illustrate the influence that Scott had about in perpetuating the cultural memory of the region. A consideration of Joseph Mallord William Turner’s commissioned illustrations for a new edition of Scott’s poetical works demonstrates an artistic portrayal of the Minstrelsy sites of memory to which Scott, very close to the end of his life, ascribed particular significance. Turner’s Border tour of 1831 was to a large extent directed by Scott, and his visit to Abbotsford in August of that year saw him being commissioned to sketch sites such as Smailholm, Hermitage Castle and Gilnockie Tower. These castles and views stand in direct contrast to the dramatic illustrations representing the events of Scott’s later fiction.

**Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Recollections of a tour made in Scotland, A.D. 1803”**

Dorothy and William Wordsworth met Scott for the first time at Lasswade, near Edinburgh, in September 1803. Their visit to the Borders took place during the
sixth and final week of the Scottish walking tour they began on 15 August, on which they were initially accompanied by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It was the first time the pair had been in Scotland (see Walker 1997: 1). “Recollections of a tour made in Scotland, A.D. 1803”\(^{160}\) is an account of the journey Dorothy\(^{161}\) set down in the months following their return to Grasmere in September. Although the notes she drew upon had ostensibly been kept to inspire her brother’s poetry, scholars such as Nabholtz have suggested Dorothy’s recollections of the tour of Scotland represent her first sustained attempt at describing landscape from an artistic perspective, heavily influenced by Gilpin’s interpretation of the picturesque (see Nabholtz 1964: 122).

The week the Wordsworths spent in the Borders took place four months after the second edition of the *Minstrelsy* was published, and five years after the publication of the first edition of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s ground-breaking *Lyrical Ballads*, a poetry collection in which landscape, memory and the “language really used by men” (W. Wordsworth and Coleridge 2005 [1800]: 287) were central concerns. The introduction was facilitated by a mutual friend, the writer and lawyer Sir John Stoddart. Stoddart, author of *Remarks on the Local Scenery and Manners of Scotland* (1801), was a frequent visitor to Scott’s cottage in Lasswade, and wrote of the house that “its image will never recur to my memory, without a throng of […] pleasing associations” (Stoddart 1801: 127). He was an admirer of Scott’s early work, and has been identified as the author of the favourable review of the *Minstrelsy* which appeared in *The Edinburgh Review* in January 1803 (see Copinger 1895:

\(^{160}\)Quotes from this account will be drawn from J. C. Shairp’s edition of Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Recollections of a Tour made in Scotland A. D. 1803*. (1894; 3rd ed.)

\(^{161}\)Where it is deemed necessary, I will be referring to Dorothy and William Wordsworth either by their first names or initials in the following discussion, in order to avoid confusion between the two.
3). It is likely that the Wordsworths encountered the *Minstrelsy* for the first time on this visit: in a study of W. Wordsworth’s reading, Duncan Wu suggests that he came into possession of the second edition of the *Minstrelsy* through his friend Richard Sharp in the summer of 1805 (see Wu 1995: 184).

Dorothy and William had entered Scotland by crossing the river Sark, close to Gretna. From here they continued through Dumfriesshire (where they visited the grave of Robert Burns), the Clyde Valley and modern-day Stirlingshire. They journeyed north as far as Killin before making their way south once more, passing by the banks of Loch Lomond and through the Trossachs (where Coleridge left them). Having left the Trossachs behind, William and Dorothy continued south via Stirling, Falkirk, Linlithgow and Edinburgh. On Saturday 17 September, having spent the previous night at an inn in Roslin, they walked to Scott’s house at Lasswade, as Dorothy recorded in the “Recollections”:

> Arrived at Lasswade before Mr. and Mrs. Scott had risen, and waited some time in a large sitting-room. Breakfasted with them, and stayed till two o’clock, and Mr. Scott accompanied us back almost to Roslin, having given us directions respecting our future journey, and promised to meet us at Melrose two days after. (D. Wordsworth 1894: 246.)

Before their next meeting, the Wordsworths walked to Peebles and followed the River Tweed east through Innerleithen. They lodged at a house in Clovenfords, where Scott himself frequently stayed. Scott’s duties as Sheriff Depute of Selkirkshire required his presence in the region from mid-July to mid-October, and the inn at Clovenfords would have served this purpose before he took on the lease of Ashiestiel in 1804. Lockhart described the inn at Clovenfords as:
…a favourite fishing station on the road from Edinburgh to Selkirk. From this place [Scott] could ride to the county town whenever business required his presence and he was also within a few miles of Yarrow and Ettrick, where he obtained large accessions to his store of ballads. (Lockhart 1902; 2: 51.)

In his account, Shortreed recalled Willie Elliot of Millburnholm’s deferential reaction to “Mr Scott the advocate” (Shortreed, in Wilson 1932: 57, original emphasis). Dorothy Wordsworth became aware of a similar degree of respect for Scott’s name in Selkirkshire. As she recalled, “Mr. Scott is respected everywhere. I believe that by favour of his name one might be hospitably entertained throughout all the borders of Scotland” (D. Wordsworth 1894: 252).

Two days after the night spent at Clovenfords, Scott met the pair in Melrose and gave Dorothy and William a tour around the town and abbey. Dorothy was impressed by his knowledge: “he was here on his own ground, for he is familiar with all that is known of the authentic history of Melrose and the popular tales connected with it” (D. Wordsworth 1894: 255-6). The weather was wet and a planned trip to Kelso had to be put off, so the Wordsworths visited Dryburgh and then Jedburgh. In Jedburgh, they lodged in a house overlooking a churchyard and here Dorothy was somewhat perturbed by the sight of local women beating their washing on the headstones. That evening, Scott called on them at dinnertime, and Dorothy recalled him repeating some lines of “The Lay of the Last Minstrel” which was then a work in progress. The following day, he accompanied the Wordsworths on a walk along the River Jed, where they were joined by William Laidlaw, who was attending the town court as a member of the jury and was keen to meet the Wordsworths, being an admirer of William’s poetry (see Lockhart 1902; 2: 139). Dorothy described Laidlaw as:
…a young man from the Braes of Yarrow, an acquaintance of Mr. Scott’s who, having been much delighted with some of William’s poems which he had chanced to see in a newspaper, had wished to be introduced to him; he lived in the most retired part of the dale of Yarrow, where he had a farm: he was fond of reading, and well informed, but at first meeting as shy as any of our Grasmere lads, and not less rustic in his appearance. (D. Wordsworth 1894: 266.)

The Wordsworths did not visit Yarrow on this visit to Scotland, a decision marked by W. Wordsworth’s poem “Yarrow Unvisited”, noted by Dorothy in the “Recollections”. The poem, of which the two final stanzas are quoted below, discusses both the vision and the unseen reality. The final line may be a direct reference to the ballad “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow” (MSB 56): 162

Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown,
It must, or we shall rue it,
We have a vision of our own,
Ah! Why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We’ll keep them, “winsome Marrow,”
For when we’re there, although ’tis fair,
’Twill be another Yarrow.

If care with freezing years should come,
and wandering seem but folly,
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy,
Should life be full and spirits low,
’Twill soothe us in our sorrow
That earth has something yet to show –
The bonny Holms of Yarrow.
(W. Wordsworth, in D. Wordsworth 1894: 254.)

In the lines above, William outlines a preference not to give a physical shape to the hitherto imaginary vision of the past. The reality may have been that Dorothy did not wish to make the journey in cold, wet weather, and was uninspired by the

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162 It is likely that William Hamilton’s poem “The Braes of Yarrow”, included in Ramsay’s Tea-Table Miscellany (1724), was also a key influence.
“confined barren prospect” from the window of the house at Clovenfords (D. Wordsworth 1894: 252). Scott’s mediating influence plainly appears in the gap which such visitors intended to fill: a space between the ballad, historical event or poem as an intangible site of memory, and its corresponding physical place in the landscape, with which individual memories may be compared and contrasted.

On 23 September, the final day that the Wordsworths spent in Scott’s company, Scott walked with them up a small hill overlooking Hawick, from which they surveyed Liddesdale laid out to the south. Dorothy remembered that during the return to the town, “we scarcely passed a house for which he had not some story” (D. Wordsworth 1894: 269). Taking their farewells of Scott at Hawick on their return, Dorothy and William started for home, looking out for sites mentioned by Scott along the way. They made a point of passing Branxholm Castle, belonging to the Duke of Buccleuch, “which we looked at with particular interest for the sake of the Lay of the Last Minstrel” (D. Wordsworth 1894: 270). Near Teviothead, they searched in vain for “some old stumps of trees, said to be the place where Johnny Armstrong was hanged; but we could not find them out.” (D. Wordsworth 1894: 271). From Teviothead, the Wordsworths passed on to Mosspaul, Langholm, and wound their way home to Grasmere, returning to Dove Cottage on the evening of Sunday, 25 September. Soon after their return, William wrote to Scott to thank him for his attentions during their visit, and also mentions the search for the site of Armstrong’s execution: “We did not omit noticing Johnnie Armstrong’s keep, but his hanging place, to our great regret, we missed…” (letter from W. Wordsworth to Scott, 16 Oct. 1803, in Lockhart 1902; 1: 139). To Lockhart himself, William recollected how Scott
As ‘recitation’ and ‘chant’ (or ‘chaunt’) were so often used by Scott himself to describe the way in which source singers performed their ballads, it is useful to find a reference to the term which relates to Scott’s own poetical performance.

Dorothy appears to have been particularly impressed by Scott’s local connections and his extensive knowledge of local lore. Writing to her friend Lady Margaret Beaumont in 1805, Dorothy’s recollections of the time she spent in Scott’s company portray him as living and breathing the local spirit of the Borders:

When we were in Scotland we spent several days with Mr Scott, we were at his house, he limped by our side through the groves of Roslin, went with us along the shores of Tiviot, and the Tweed, led us to Melrose Abbey and pointed out every famous hill and told some tale of every old Hall we passed by. His local attachments are more strong than those of any person I ever saw—his whole heart and soul seem to be devoted to the Scottish Streams Yarrow and Tweed Tiviot and the rest of them of which we hear in the Border Ballads, and I am sure that there is not a story ever told by the firesides in that neighbourhood that he cannot repeat and many more that are not so familiar. (D. Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont, 4 May 1805, in de Selincourt 1967; 1: 590-591.)

The term “local attachments” was a fairly common contemporary phrase, and probably had its roots in the Cornish antiquarian Richard Polwhele’s seven-part poem “On the Influence of Local Attachment, with respect to Home” (1796). As

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164 Jane Austen, for example, makes use of this term in both the novels *Sense and Sensibility* (London: T. Egerton, 1811; 1: 169) and *Pride and Prejudice* (London: T. Egerton, 1813; 2: 102).

164 Jane Austen, for example, makes use of this term in both the novels *Sense and Sensibility* (London: T. Egerton, 1811; 1: 169) and *Pride and Prejudice* (London: T. Egerton, 1813; 2: 102).
Scott would later acknowledge to Polwhele himself, he counted the poem as “an early and great favourite” (Scott to Richard Polwhele, 21 Jun. 1808; SL 2: 81). Dorothy Wordsworth’s account gives some insight into Scott as a local guide, harking back to his offer to act as Patrick Murray’s “Border Cicerone” in 1793 which was noted at the beginning of this chapter. Scott’s own attachment to place and his local knowledge came to the fore when guiding visitors in the area, showing them particular views and landscapes connected to historical events and local lore, for example in directing his visitors to areas such as Armstrong’s grave. As Erll suggests, confrontation with a site of memory leads to the desire to “unfold meaning” in the viewer’s own mind, and “to associate certain images and narratives with the specific site.” (Erll 2012: 110.) Describing the area’s past to his visitors, Scott may be seen to draw upon and embellish traditional tales and ballads, perpetuating the association of certain images and narratives with the artefacts and natural landscapes of the area. Likewise, as noted above, Scott assumed the role of Border minstrel as he repeated stanzas from his own poem “The Lay of the Last Minstrel” which he was working on at the time of the Wordsworths’ visit. Incorporating many of the places and lore of the area, such as Newark castle and the tale of Gilpin Horner, Scott is here building upon the memory culture of the Border ballads.

Dorothy and William’s visit in 1803 proved to be the first of many. Over the next twenty years or so, Scott and the Wordsworths explored the Borders and the north of England together.165 As Scott recalled to Dorothy in a letter many years later, “…it is with particular pleasure that I look back on the days of our happy excursions both in Scotland and England and so well do the recollections

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165 Lockhart gives a brief account of Scott’s first visit to the Lake District in 1805 (Lockhart 1902; 2: 221).
of them survive in my memory…” (Scott to D. Wordsworth, June 1825; SL 9: 128). The Wordsworths visited Scott at an early stage of Scott’s literary career; as noted above, his first major poem “The Lay of the Last Minstrel” had yet to be finished. When their friend and fellow poet Robert Southey visited Scott in 1805 in the company of the classicist Peter Elmsley, Scott guided him to similar landmarks. Southey recalled finding in Scott a font of traditional lore:

…so full of topographical anecdote that having seen him you would be perfectly well satisfied how well history may be preserved by tradition. We saw much classic ground besides the Tweed. The Yarrow with Newark Castle, Branksome overlooking the Tiviot & Johnny Armstrongs strong hold on the Esk. (Southey to Richard Duppa, November 1804; in Curry 1965: 407.)

Southey’s use of the term “classic ground” is one which, as we shall see, returns time and time again in the recollections of Scott’s visitors, and may be aligned with the concept of a site of memory. In his recent study of the “natural sublime” in the Romantic era, Ciaran Duffy defines classic ground as “spaces whose cultural values were already highly determined, that is, spaces, both natural and artificial, which had already been inscribed with a rich layer of historical and cultural associations” (Duffy 2013: 13). As is evident from Dorothy’s recollections, memory is also a crucial factor in the formation of the concept of ‘classic ground’ in relation to Scott’s Borders, and this is also borne out in the case of Washington Irving’s visit, below. The term ‘classic ground’ encompasses two perspectives: the cultural memory of the area which Scott gathered alongside the ballads, and his perpetuation and embellishment of these sites of memory, which worked upon the imaginations of those drawn to the area.
The increasingly broad use of this term coincided with a general shift to localised as well as continental travel.\textsuperscript{166} Scott himself made use of the term further on in his “Border Cicerone” letter of 1793 to Patrick Murray:

As to your rivers it is part of my creed that the Tweed and Teviot yield to none in the world, nor do I fear that even in your eyes, which have been feasted on classic ground, they will greatly sink in comparison with the Tiber or Po. (Scott to Patrick Murray, Sept. 13 1793; \textit{SL} 1: 27.)

In a letter to Lady Louisa Stuart in 1809, Scott extended the term to areas portrayed in traditional song and more modern poems. As he noted “Newark and the braes of Yarrow are also worth seeing even if the last were not classical ground in Scottish song.” (Scott to Lady Louisa Stuart, 22 Jul. 1809; \textit{SL} 2: 209.)

When the American author Washington Irving visited Scott in 1817, Scott would take care to show him the “classic” ground he had purchased to extend his lands at Abbotsford.

\textbf{Washington Irving at Abbotsford, August 1817}

Irving’s first visit to Scott at Abbotsford in August 1817 marked the start of a lifelong personal and professional friendship between the two men. Born in New

\textsuperscript{166} In view of its subject matter, the date of this letter, written just over a week after the beginning of the “Reign of Terror” in France at the hands of the Jacobin government, may be seen to hold particular significance. With the outbreak of the French revolution in 1789, British travel to Europe decreased significantly, and after France declared war on Britain in February 1793, it virtually stopped altogether. As critics such as Susan Oliver and John Sutherland have identified, Scott’s patriotic and military fervour reached its height during the 1790s, inspired, like so many of his generation, by the tumultuous events in Europe during the 1790s when invasion of the British Isles seemed imminent. (See Oliver 2008: 7-11; Sutherland 1995: 87.) Scott’s middle-class upbringing meant that his chances of undertaking an adventure such as the educational “Grand Tour” would have been highly unlikely, notwithstanding the political situation in France. His letter also illustrates the change of emphasis in the concept of the tour that took place during Scott’s lifetime, which has interested scholars such as John Towner (1985) and later John Urry (1991). As Urry describes, “the character of the tour itself shifted, from the earlier ‘classic Grand Tour’ based on emotionally neutral observation […] to the 19th century ‘Romantic Grand Tour’ which saw the emergence of beauty and the sublime” (Urry 1991: 4).
York in April 1783, Irving was nearly twelve years Scott’s junior. Like many second generation immigrants, Irving felt his Scottish roots strongly. His father William was from the island of Shapinsay, Orkney. His mother Sarah Sanders was the daughter of Scottish / English immigrants; her father was a clergyman in New York. Growing up, Irving’s Scottish nursemaid Lizzie had ensured Scottish tales and songs were a formative part of his childhood (see Jones 2011).

There were pronounced differences between Scott’s situation at the time of the Wordsworths’ first visit to Lasswade in 1803 and Irving’s stay at Abbotsford in 1817. In 1803, Scott was putting the finishing touches to “The Lay of the Last Minstrel”. By the time a post-chaise containing Irving arrived at the gates of Abbotsford, Scott’s renowned career as a poet had peaked. In 1813 he had turned down the role of Poet Laureate, recommending Southey in his place. His authorship of the six “Waverley” novels was something of an open secret; certainly Irving had little doubt as to the anonymous author’s identity. Scott had also been able to shape the scenery around him in a more physical manner. In 1811 he had purchased the small farm of Cartley Hole (or “Clarty Hole”) between Galashiels and Melrose. The site consisted of a small, bleak farmhouse surrounded by one hundred and ten acres of poorly drained, largely uncultivated land. The purchase had scarcely been completed when Scott renamed his new property Abbotsford, and began a course of development and expansion. Over the next twenty years, the once humble farmhouse was turned into the famed mansion Scott himself termed “conundrum castle” through a series of ambitious renovations which proved to be both a labour of love and an immense drain on his purse (see *WS Journal*, 7 Jan. 1828; in Anderson 1998: 463). By 1817, Scott was in the process of completing the initial expansion of the original house.
During the development of the property, Scott pored over guides such as Uvedale Price’s *Essays on the Picturesque as compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1794). The advice contained in such volumes would have had an effect on the scenic ‘tours’ he conducted for an expanding number of house guests as well as his plans for Abbotsford’s grounds. It was not simply Scott’s comprehension of the aesthetics of landscape that made such a powerful impression on Irving, however, but his knowledge of local lore and his capacity to bring the land to life.

Irving’s 1817 visit to Britain was partly inspired by his desire to implement simultaneous American and British copyrights for his work, in particular *A Knickerbocker’s History of New York* (1809) which had met with much acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. Arriving in Edinburgh in late August 1817, Irving busied himself in the city for four days, meeting William Blackwood, the Scottish agent for John Murray (whom Irving had previously met in London to discuss the copyright issue) and the critic Francis Jeffrey. On 30 August, he made his way south to Abbotsford bearing a letter of introduction from the poet Thomas Campbell, and received a hearty welcome from Scott and his assorted dogs.

Nearly twenty years later, Irving drew on his memories of this special time to write down his recollections of the visit, although he admitted that the notes he took at the time of his Abbotsford visit were “scanty and vague, and my memory […] extremely fallacious” (Irving 1835: 3). In 1835 the account was

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*I have been studying Price with all my eyes and [am] not without hopes of converting an old gravel-pit into a bower and an exhausted quarry into a bathing-house. So you see my dear Madam how deeply I am bit with the madness of the picturesque and if your Ladyship hears that I have caught a rheumatic fever in the gravel-pit or have been drowned in the quarry I trust you will give me credit for dying a martyr to taste.” (Scott to Lady Abercorn, 23 March 1813; *SL* 3: 240.)*
published by John Murray alongside Irving’s impressions of Newstead Abbey\textsuperscript{168} under the title \textit{Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey} in 1835.\textsuperscript{169} Irving misremembered the year of his travels in the Borders as 1816, a fact disputed by Lockhart and backed up by Scott’s correspondence with his friend John Richardson in September 1817, in which Scott alludes to Irving’s visit and professes himself delighted with his new friend, “one of the best and pleasantest acquaintances I have made this many a day” (Scott to John Richardson, 22 Sep. 1817; \textit{SL} 4: 532). As conversations and descriptions of the landscape which Scott showed Irving are described in minute detail, it may be suspected that Irving’s memories have been laced with a degree of imaginative embellishment. As discussed above in relation to Laidlaw and Shortreed, such a fact serves to bring the memorial dynamic of this text into sharp relief. Although their absolute accuracy may be in question, Irving’s rich and picturesque descriptions of the “storied vicinity” that Scott introduced him reflect the deep impression which Scott’s portrayal of the Borders made on his American visitor (Irving 1835: 96). Furthermore, they also shed light on the processes of recreation and transmission integral to the memory culture of Scott’s \textit{Minstrelsy}.

Although he had initially intended to spend only a day in Scott’s company, Irving was soon persuaded to extend his stay and Scott undertook to show him Melrose, Yarrow, and Dryburgh Abbey. On his first full day, Scott’s son Charles was enlisted to show Irving around Melrose Abbey while Scott was working, and Irving noted that Charles had “an ample stock of anecdotes about

\textsuperscript{168} Lord Byron’s ancestral home in Nottinghamshire, which Irving had visited in 1831 and 1832, some years after Byron’s death.

\textsuperscript{169} The manuscript for this account is held in the National Library of Scotland, where it forms part of the John Murray archive. The MS has been digitized and may be viewed online (http://digital.nls.uk/jma/gallery/title.cfm?id=65. 11/6/14). In the following discussion, references will be drawn from Murray’s edition.
the neighbourhood, which he had learned from his father” (Irving 185: 9) Over
the next four days, the men (Scott’s wife and daughters receive only a cursory
mention at the beginning of the account) roved around the surrounding
countryside, with Scott pointing out memorable views and landmarks, reciting
Border ballads and discussing the lore of the area. Irving and Scott were
frequently joined by William Laidlaw, who had by this time taken up the
position of factor at Abbotsford. The two men apparently discussed Scott’s own
efforts in collecting and preserving the *Minstrelsy* ballads:

When collecting materials for his Border Minstrelsy, he used, he said, to
go from cottage to cottage, and make the old wives repeat all they knew,
if but two lines; and, by putting these scraps together, he retrieved many a
fine characteristic old ballad or tradition from oblivion. (Irving 1835: 89.)

Scott’s tales of Border chivalry greatly appealed to Irving’s Romantic
consciousness. Walking with Scott, Irving reports being assailed by childhood
memories of ballads and stories, indicating that he was well aware of the song
traditions which had preceded Scott’s imaginative reworking of the area through
his poetry:

We rambled on among scenes which had been familiar in Scottish song,
and rendered classic by the pastoral Muse long before Scott had thrown
the rich mantle of his poetry over them. What a thrill of pleasure I did
feel when I first saw the broom-covered tops of the Cowdenknows
peeping above the grey hills of the Tweed; and what touching
associations were called up by the sight of Ettrick Vale, Gala Water, and
the Braes of Yarrow. Every turn brought to mind some household air,
some almost forgotten song of the nursery, by which I had been lulled to
sleep in my childhood; and with them the looks and voices of those who
had sung them, and who were now no more. Scotland is eminently a land
of song, and it is these melodies, chanted in our ears in the days of
infancy, and connected with the memory of those we have loved, and
who have passed away, that clothe Scottish landscape with such tender
associations. (Irving 1835: 24-5)
Irving’s account provides a host of examples concerning this memorial association which Scott channelled in drawing Irving’s attention to sites of memory as he showed his guest around the area, and reciting the ballads and tales connected to them. During a walk around Melrose, “Scott as usual, took the lead […] giving scraps of border rhymes and stories” (Irving 1835: 96). Irving also recalled Scott joking with a hedger on the Abbotsford estate and quoting lines from “The Souters of Selkirk” (MSB 21; see Irving 1835: 22), whilst on another occasion, Scott took Irving to see the Eildon stone, the legendary site of Thomas’s first encounter with the Fairy Queen in the ballad “Thomas the Rhymer” (MSB 45). As Irving, Scott and Laidlaw walked up the glen which Scott had recently re-named “Rhymer’s Glen” on purchasing the land to add to his estate (see Scott to Sharpe, 11 Oct. 1817; SL 4: 539; Lyle 2007: 13), Scott recited lines from the ballad, and apparently referred once more to the concept of ‘classic ground’:

“We are now,” said Scott “treading classic, or rather fairy, ground. This is the haunted glen of Thomas the Rhymer, where he met with the Queen of Fairyland; and this the Bogle Burn, or Goblin Brook, along which she rode on her dapple grey palfrey, with silver bells ringing at the bridle.”

Scott continued on, leading the way as usual, and limping up the Wizard Glen, talking as he went […] I found he was reciting some scrap of border minstrelsy about Thomas the Rhymer. This was continually the case in my ramblings with him about this storied neighbourhood, his mind was fraught with the traditionary fictions connected with every object around him, and he would breathe it forth as he went… (Irving 1835: 68-9).
Scott guided Irving to several viewpoints, and although it is not possible to state the exact positions of these it is likely that Scott would have showed Irving the view of the Eildon Hills from Bemersyde, as it was his own particular favourite. On stopping at one such vista, Scott proceeded “to call over names celebrated in Scottish song” (Irving 1835: 29). He then directed Irving’s attention to the Lammermuir hills, Smailholm, Galashiels and Torwoodlee, and pointed his companion in the direction of the Braes of Yarrow and Ettrick Water. Irving, for his part, perceived the views with a certain sense of dissatisfaction, as the scene appeared far less dramatic than he had imagined:

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170 A copy of this licence may be viewed at http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/25.2.14.

171 “Scott’s View”, as it is known today, can be reached on the modern-day B6356 and affords a panoramic view over the Tweed Valley.
I beheld a mere succession of grey waving hills, line beyond line, as far as my eye could reach, monotonous in their aspect, and so destitute of trees, that one could almost see a stout fly walking along their profile; and the far-famed Tweed appeared a naked stream, flowing between bare hills, without a tree or a thicket on its banks… (Irving 1835: 29).

However, Irving also recognised the influence which the power of association had on him, observing that “such had been the magic web of poetry and romance thrown over the whole, that it had a greater charm for me than the richest scenery I had beheld in England” (Irving 1835: 29-30). From Irving’s account, we can see that he was aware both of the “traditional songs, which clothed every rock and stream with old-world stories, handed down from age to age, and generation to generation” (Irving 1835: 103) and the particular skill Scott had in bringing these tales to life. For Irving, these associations had immortalised the area as “classic ground.”

Writing to his brother Peter soon after his arrival at Abbotsford, Irving enthused: “I have rambled about the hills with Scott; visited the haunts of Thomas the Rhymer, and other spots rendered classic by border tale and witching song, and have been in a kind of dream, or delirium.” (Irving to Peter Irving, 1 Sep. 1817; in P. Irving 1883; 1: 184.) As Ben Harris McLary has noted, the four days spent at Abbotsford left Irving with “a mind filled with memories” (McLary 1965: 115). Writing to Peter Irving again soon after his visit, Irving reinforced the richness of the days he had spent with Scott, and spoke of them as having been charged with an intensity which appeared to exist outside the ordinary passage of time:

The few days I passed there were among the most delightful of my life, and worth as many years of ordinary existence. We made a charming visit to Dryburgh Abbey, but were prevented making our visit to Yarrow by
company. I was with Scott from morning till night; rambling about the hills and streams, every one of which would bring to his mind some old tale or picturesque remark. (Irving to Peter Irving, 6 Sep. 1817; P. Irving 1883: 1, 186.)

The Reflections of Elizabeth Grant and Henry Cockburn

The diarist Elizabeth Grant (1797-1885) also used the term ‘classic ground’ when she used this term in conjunction with the Borders in her autobiography *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, which she began in 1845. Grant spent the early part of her childhood between London and the family estate of Rothiemurchus, near Aviemore. In her memoirs, which were published posthumously in 1898, Grant recalled travelling north by coach from London in July 1812, when she was fifteen years old. As she notes earlier in her memoirs, she and her siblings travelled with three of Scott’s poems, “The Lay of the Last Minstrel”, “Marmion” and “The Lady of the Lake”, and they were also well acquainted with the contents of the *Minstrelsy*:

My head had begun to arrange its ideas. The *Flowers o’ the Forest* and *Marmion* were running through it. […] We went to Melrose, dined at Jedburgh, passed Cowdenknowes, Tweedside, Ettrick Shaws, Gala Water, starting up in the carriage in ecstasies, flinging ourselves half out at the sides each time these familiar names excited us. In vain Miss Elphick pulled our frocks. I am sure she feared she had undertaken the charge of lunatics, particularly when I burst forth in song at either Tweedside or Yarrow braes. It was not so much the scenery, it was the “classic ground” of all the Border country (Grant 1811: 165).

Scott’s close friend Lord Henry Cockburn (1779-1854) also mused upon Scott’s influence on his own apprehension of the Borders in an entry of the journal he kept as a Circuit judge from 1837-1854, published posthumously as *Circuit Journeys* (1889). Walking in the Yarrow Valley in September 1839,
Cockburn observes that the Border country is particularly pleasing to “a Scotch and pastoral eye” (Cockburn 1889: 55-6), but it was the old tower of Newark which lent its special charm to the surrounding landscape. As he walked through the valley from St Mary’s Loch to Bowhill, Cockburn was struck by

[the old stories and ballads, and the genius of Scott lingering in every valley, and embellishing every feature and every tale. The bareness, openness, and sameness of the valley might seem to preclude its being interesting, but these are the very things that aid the old associations, and impart that feeling of pleasing melancholy which belongs to the region. There is inspiration in the words Newark, Yarrow, and Dryhope. (Cockburn 1889: 55-6)

The stark Border hills, and the relationship of the actual to the imagination, are connected themes which Dorothy Wordsworth, Irving and Cockburn all commented upon. On entering Teviotdale, Dorothy Wordsworth remembered, “there was a want of trees, and no appearance of richness” (D. Wordsworth, 1894: 260) while Irving confessed to Scott that “my ideas of romantic landscape were apt to be well wooded” (Irving 1835: 35). Scott himself, an enthusiastic planter of trees on his Abbotsford estate, commented on the way in which deforestation could harm a previously picturesque view. In a note to his poem “The Gray Brother” (MSB 85) he observed “The beauty of this striking scene has been much injured, of late years, by the indiscriminate use of the axe.” (MSB 1803; 3: 414). For the commentators whose recollection have been drawn upon in this chapter, the austere landscape acted as tabula rasa, allowing unimpeded access to the imaginative flow of associations.
Above, it has been demonstrated how the relationship of landscape and painting were close concerns to contemporary visitors to what might be termed ‘Scott’s Borders’. Joseph Mallord William Turner’s visit to Abbotsford in 1831 allows for an examination of these two aspects in close proximity with regard to sites of memory in the *Minstrelsy*. In February 1831, Scott’s publisher Robert Cadell approached Turner to commission a number of watercolours which would be engraved in order to illustrate a new edition of Scott’s *Poetical Works*; Cadell’s plan was for the *Minstrelsy* to make up the first four volumes. Although Turner and Scott had yet to meet face to face, Turner had previously been involved with Scott when he had contributed designs for *Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland* (1819-1826). The two men’s working relationship during this period had not been an altogether happy one. Although Scott greatly admired Turner’s work, he found the artist’s mercenary attitude off-putting and had previously warned the artist James Skene, who was mentioned in Chapter Five, that “Turners [sic] palm is as itchy as his fingers” (Scott to James Skene, 30 Apr. 1819; MS 965, f. 62). However, as Gerard Finley has described, relations were greatly improved by Turner’s visit to Abbotsford in the later summer of 1831, when the two men met for the first time on Scott’s own territory.

In August 1831 Scott’s health was in terminal decline; he was suffering from the after-effects of a recent stroke which had occurred in April and had exacerbated the difficulties in speech and movement he had endured since his earlier strokes of February and November the previous year. Nonetheless, Scott was keen to proceed with Turner’s illustration project and felt it imperative that
the painter should visit the area again rather than drawing on his previous
sketches. In March 1831 Scott wrote to Cadell promising to point Turner in the
direction of particular scenes which could be worked up into illustrations for the
*Minstrelsy*:

…I will be happy supposing Mr Turner comes here for a few days to
receive him with all hospitality and conduct him to all the scenes most fit
for the minstrelsy. They are numerous & very striking. Smaillholm [*sic*]
tower near which was the abode of my Childhood Newark castle
(somewhat hackd) Cessford castle Hermitage castle & many very fine
views besides. This is in some degree a plague for Mr Turner though an
artist of very great genius is not so pleasant as such persons usually are.
But he will be [*a*] wellcome [*sic*] guest on this occasion & no one but
myself perhaps can make him fix on the fit subjects. (Scott to Cadell, 13
Mar. 1831; *SL* 11: 486.)

The places to which Scott directed Turner allow us to gain an impression of the
sites which Scott himself associated most intimately with the collection he had
published nearly thirty years previously. The memorial significance of
Smaillholm and Hermitage, as previously discussed, may again be seen in this
instance. The ruined tower of Newark, which stands in the grounds of the Duke
of Buccleuch’s seat of Bowhill, Yarrow, features particularly in “The Sang of the
Outlaw Murray” (MSB 1), and Scott’s personal identification with this ballad
was outlined in Chapter Four. Cessford Castle lies between Jedburgh and Kelso
and was the ancestral seat of the Kerr family, many of whom had acted as
wardens of the Scottish Middle March.

Turner arrived at Abbotsford on 4 August 1831, having spent the
previous two weeks sketching in the area. His *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*
The sketchbook is now held in the Tate Gallery. On 6 August, Laidlaw, Cadell, Turner and Scott made an outing to Smailholm Tower and Sandyknowe, a day Gerard Finley has described as “one of Turner’s most memorable days in Scotland” (Finley 1980: 114). To commemorate this special day he spent in Scott’s company at Smailholm, Turner made a special watercolour edition of the tower entitled “Smailholm Tower and Sandyknowe Farm” as a gift for Scott, who received the painting when he was in Naples in March 1832. In the event, the following eight illustrations by Turner were included in the *Minstrelsy*:

**Volume One**
- Carlisle (frontispiece)
- Smailholm Tower (vignette)

**Volume Two**
- Jedburgh Abbey (frontispiece)
- Johnie Armstrong’s Tower (vignette)

**Volume Three**
- Kelso (frontispiece)
- Lochmaben Castle (vignette)

**Volume Four**
- Caerlaverock Castle (frontispiece)
- Hermitage Castle (vignette)

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172 The sketchbook may be viewed online at http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/tour-of-scotland-for-scotts-poetical-works-r1136022#entry-main (18/2/14).
173 Today the painting is held in a private collection (see Finley 1980: 150-151).
Jedburgh Abbey may have been inserted in place of Dryburgh Abbey. As Gerard Finley points out, Scott constantly raised the latter in connection to the *Minstrelsy*, frequently suggesting the family mausoleum at Dryburgh, where his wife Charlotte had been laid to rest six years earlier, as a possible subject. Scott almost certainly considered that a depiction of Dryburgh would offer a natural symmetry to a collection which encompassed his ancestral origins and childhood. Cadell, however, who was strongly against admitting allusions to Scott’s mortality, suggested Jedburgh Abbey as an alternative (see Finley 1980: 254).

Turner’s visit marked the final time Scott would guide a guest around the area, but over the preceding years he had shown the Border region to a host of visitors, imparting his own brand of history, tradition and myth. From the painter’s portrayal of the town of Carlisle to Kelso and Smailholm tower, where Scott spent much of his youth, this final selection represents a careful interweaving of Scott’s own past and Border history. All had their associations with Border history and many had personal associations for Scott, his youth and his life’s work (see Figs. 19-21).

**Conclusions**

From the accounts of Dorothy Wordsworth and Washington Irving, as well as those of Elizabeth Grant and Henry Cockburn, it is clear that Scott took an active role in transmitting and perpetuating his own versions of Border lore which he had first condensed within the *Minstrelsy*. In particular, his willingness to act as ‘tour guide’ may be paralleled with the *Minstrelsy*’s accompanying notes. In both cases, the vivid impression left in the minds of his visitors and readers stemmed from the ways in which Scott peopled the austere landscape with his own
imaginative renditions of past events, memories of which had been preserved, to some degree, in the lore of the region. Alongside this curation of cultural memories, Scott also appropriated the lore of the area in a more tangible manner, through his acquisition of “classic, or fairy ground” to add to his Abbotsford estate (Irving 1835: 68). All those above who visited him at Abbotsford commented on the richness that the association with history and the ballads lent to their perception of an otherwise bare landscape, the outward appearance of which failed to adhere to popular notions of picturesque scenery. Scott’s remediation of the area’s lore planted fresh seeds of association and inspiration in the minds of his readers in search of Romantic and picturesque experiences. Turner’s visit, which took place close to the end of Scott’s life, foregrounds the sites of Smailholm Tower, Gilnockie Tower (which once belonged to Johnie Armstrong) and Hermitage Castle as particularly significant sites of memory bound up with Scott’s own engagement with, and interpretation of, the cultural memory of the Borders. The visit shows Scott clearly considering the *Minstrelsy* in the context of his own memorial, and the resulting picture that emerges in this case, therefore, is of a return towards the personal memory of an individual life-span.
Figure 19. Johnie Armstrong’s Tower (c. 1832), from Scott’s *Poetical Works*. Joseph Mallord William Turner. © Tate, London 2014. Used with permission.
Figure 21. Smallholm Tower (1834) from Scott’s *Poetical Works*. Joseph Mallord William Turner. © Tate, London 2014. Used with permission.
Conclusion

Far from the antiquarian preservation project which Scott outlined in the collection’s introduction, Walter Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* profoundly shaped the cultural memories it apparently set out to preserve. This thesis has investigated the collective and personal memory dynamics at play within and around the creation of the collection, exploring the cultural memories from which Scott fashioned the *Minstrelsy*’s representation of people, place and the past. In so doing, significant findings have been made in a number of areas, which will be briefly outlined below.

In Chapters One and Two, it was noted that, despite the abundance of Scott scholarship, the *Minstrelsy* is generally an under-researched text. The present study maintains that that an examination of the broad theme of personal and cultural memory within the background, compilation and context of the *Minstrelsy* can bring new insights into the memorial frameworks of people and place which underpin the collection. One of the ways in which this research breaks new ground is through an investigation of the ‘thick history’ of Scott’s immediate family past, and the people whose own memories fed into the ballad collection. Successive chapters have developed along three related lines of inquiry, examining the forms of memory from which the *Minstrelsy* was drawn, the ways in which the *Minstrelsy* functioned as a medium of cultural memory, and the ways in which the ballad collection itself became, for Scott and others, a ‘site of memory’. Central to this is the concept of Scott’s selection and curation of a broader ‘hinterland’ of texts, songs, landscapes and memories. From the outset, an emphasis has been placed on the importance of a nuanced approach
which reclaims Scott’s own relationship to tradition, whilst avoiding reifying the concept of authenticity.

To answer the initial question regarding the forms of memory from which the *Minstrelsy* was drawn, evidence has been drawn from contemporary correspondence, memoirs, reminiscences and autobiography, in order to explore the layered memory cultures from which Scott fashioned the collection. These memoirs are recognised as selective, dynamic entities, representative of what Rigney has termed “an active and constantly changing relationship to the past, in which the past is charged retrospectively in the sense that its meaning is changed.” (Rigney 2005: 17.) In the examples of memoir discussed over the course of this thesis, Scott’s later fame is one factor integral to these ‘charged’ memories; others, such as factual gaps and inconsistencies, are also fundamental components of the remembering process. These reminiscences are part of the memory culture surrounding Scott himself, but they also uncover the social networks of cultural memory with which Scott grew acquainted during his editing of the *Minstrelsy* and shed light on his initial experience of various sites which would be imaginatively portrayed and frequently reinterpreted in the collection’s editorial commentary.

In Chapter Three, an examination of Scott’s own autobiography revealed the familial networks which provided Scott with a life-long fascination for balladry and the history of Scotland. Although Scott’s paternal ancestry is most often cited as a key factor in Scott’s personal connection to the *Minstrelsy* ballads, the present findings show that, as well as the important figures of Scott’s paternal grandmother and aunts, significant amounts of family lore which he drew upon in the *Minstrelsy* were in fact passed down to him by female members
of his mother’s family, including his mother Ann Rutherford and maternal great-aunt Margaret Swinton. In particular, it is suggested that these two women deserve a far more prominent place than has previously been afforded them, as two crucial influences on Scott as a young boy. The circumstances under which Scott was brought up, surrounded mainly by women, stands in marked contrast to the predominantly masculine environment in which the *Minstrelsy* was compiled during the 1790s. However, it is consistent with the number of women who contributed ballad versions to the *Minstrelsy* itself, whether directly or indirectly, including Anna Brown, Marion Brown, Christian Rutherford, Jane Scott and Margaret Laidlaw. Scott’s representation of the workings of his own memory also reveals the extent to which he emphasised the mnemonic power of material objects and landscapes. This aspect of memorialisation is a key theme which plays out in Scott’s explorations of the Border region, and consequently find its way into the *Minstrelsy* itself.

As Scott was preparing the first and second editions of the *Minstrelsy* for publication, it is clear that his own explorations of the Border region itself were concurrent with his wide reading of ballad manuscripts, historical texts and chronicles. Aided by a local network of colleagues and collaborators, Scott travelled extensively within the area, dug amongst the ruins of Hermitage Castle, read the histories and had significant sites depicted in the form of images as well as the written word. Chapters Four and Five consisted of a thorough examination of Scott’s networks of correspondents and colleagues within Roxburghshire and Selkirkshire, enabled by his friendships with Robert Shortreed and William Laidlaw. Drawing in documents, contemporary maps of the time, and a close knowledge of characters involved enabled the correction of errors of later critics
(such as the identification of Dr John Elliot). This chapter also illuminated Scott’s widespread contacts and his engagement with the physical landscapes and regional lore he encountered during visits around the turn of the nineteenth century. The ballads themselves were seen to be closely bound to networks of cultural memories which were drawn on by Scott and his correspondents in not only sourcing, but also interpreting, the material. They also provide key examples of how Scott came to know many of the landmarks and settings that would be memorialised as sites of memory within the *Minstrelsy*.

Such memories, however, are almost always attached to a wider collective memory. For an example of this we can refer back to Scott’s recollection of tales told by his mother and his great-aunt Margaret Swinton, and how their stories of centuries past were clearly inextricable from the context in which they were told, around the fireside or at the sick-bed. In a similar vein, Shortreed’s reminiscences of his days with Scott also recalled memories of Scott himself telling anecdotes about their youthful exploits. These selective, autobiographical memories are considered on their own terms, allowing for a deeper understanding of the widespread social and cultural networks which Scott forged in realising his project and advancing his legal career. Scott’s portrayal of oral tradition had, to an extent, its detractor in James Hogg, whose comments on the effects of the publication are a potent reminder that the selective process of canon creation can be an act of ‘forgetting’ and well as ‘remembering’.

Chapter Six sought to address the question of how the *Minstrelsy* functioned as a medium of cultural memory, by focusing on the concept of a sense of place. Scott’s editing of place in the *Minstrelsy* not only reinforced sites of memory in the minds of his readers, but also enshrined the collection itself as
a site of memory which became a canonical reference point for future generations. On closer inspection, however, the nominative regionality of the collection’s title gives way to a paradox concerning the representation of place and significant memorial sites. Scott’s framing of the ballads with the editorial commentary was crucial to this process. In the *Minstrelsy*, this negotiation is particularly present in the interplay between the ballad text and the editorial commentary. While not all of the *Minstrelsy* ballads had a direct Borders source, Scott’s editorial commentary shows locality to have been a key organising principle. The material from oral tradition was frequently presented as an assortment of memorials crucial to the wider history of Scotland. By commemorating the past of a region historically located at the fiercely defended ‘edge’ of a nation, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* came to stand for Scotland as a whole, rather than being confined to the country’s border.

Arguably, the final question about the extent to which the *Minstrelsy* itself may be regarded as a ‘site of memory’ requires a wide-ranging diachronic approach in order to be answered fully, and future research which investigated the full impact which the *Minstrelsy* had on the oral and literary traditions of the Border over time would be a fruitful area of investigation. Taking a proximate view of the more immediate significance of Scott’s ballad collection to those who read it and had the opportunity to meet the man, Chapter Seven considered the ways in which Scott’s re-fashioning of Border lore was propagated in the minds of those who found their perceptions of the region itself indelibly influenced by Scott and his work. In this final chapter, it is possible to see the traveller turned guide, as Scott himself showed an assortment literary figures around the territory he had claimed for his own. A common theme was found to
be the barrenness of the land itself, as set against the rich landscape of song and story that Scott himself perpetuated. It is also particularly noticeable that Turner’s sketches and watercolours for the *Minstrelsy* focused on imposing artefacts and landscapes; there is no evidence that scenes from the ballads were ever considered as possible illustrations in the *Poetical Works*. From this, it might be deduced that the cultural memory embodied by the *Minstrelsy* was perceived as being steeped primarily in a sense of place.

The *Minstrelsy* may be viewed as a collection which sought to preserve, yet profoundly altered, the memory cultures in which the ballads circulated as important memorial symbols of both a regional and national past. Rather than a repository of lore, the collection itself was a dynamic entity, a site of ‘re-membering’ and inevitable change. To better understand this process, a thorough investigation of Scott’s regional networks in the Borders helps to unearth the sources of the lore to which Scott was exposed during his travels. In turn, this process deepen insights into Scott’s own imaginative landscape. The ballads Scott included in the *Minstrelsy* stood as emblems of a collective past; in taking up the mantle of ‘Border Minstrel’, Scott became an intermediary who took it upon himself to ‘fill in the blanks’, creating cohesive narratives, the creative potential of which he would develop exponentially in the years which followed the collection’s publication.

For closing thoughts on the dynamic interplay of forgetting, remembering and reinventing, we may turn to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), the work which followed Scott’s seminal ballad collection. A poem initially written for inclusion in the *Minstrelsy* itself, the final lines of the introduction to Canto I form a fitting postscript to the present study:
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet’s glowing thought supplied;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
’Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.
(Scott 1805: 8).
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“Letters of Walter Scott to the Shortreed Family.” National Library of Scotland, MS 856.
Appendices

Appendix 1. Table Sample, “The Outlaw Murray” (MSB 1)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSB</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sources / Contributor (1802)</th>
<th>Thereafter</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>HB</td>
<td>The Sang of the Outlaw Murray</td>
<td>Ballad: Mrs Cockburn “of Edinburgh, a lady whose memory will be long honoured by those who knew her” (Mrs Alison Cockburn, née Rutherford. A relation of Scott’s mother.)</td>
<td>Added 1803; 1: 5: “two verses are restored, in the present edition, from the recitation of Mr Mungo Park.”</td>
<td>Ballad:</td>
<td>Ballad: The Outlaw Murray, his wife, and 500 men in his company</td>
<td>“This ballad appears to be among the most ancient offered to the Public in the present collection” (1802; 1: 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Glenriddell MS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Birkenhead Brae Permanscore (where outlaw is told to meet King)</td>
<td>The King</td>
<td>The Sheriff of Ettrick Forest (Scott’s own appointment: 1799): “John Murray of Philiphaugh vested with the dignity of heritable Sheriff of Ettrick Forest Nov 30 1509” (1802; 1: 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Plummer Herd MS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Philipshaugh Lewinshope Newark Foulshiels The Finnies Notes: Selkirkshire</td>
<td>Hamilton James Boyd, Earl of Arran (King’s son – but Scott misunderstood this line according to Henderson).</td>
<td>“Perhaps, the tradition handed down in this Song may have had more foundation, than it would at present be proper positively to assert.” (1802; 1: 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Historical Sources: James IV charter</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tower of Hangingshaw, on banks of the Yarrow Corehead,</td>
<td>Auld Halliday, Laird of the Corehead Young Halliday,</td>
<td>Selkirkshire: “wild and frontier country” (1802; 1: 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


References:
- After 1802, a relation of Scott’s mother.
- Auld Halliday, Laird of the Corehead (1802; 1: 4)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhymer vol. 13. p. 66</th>
<th>1830: Following amendments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Information on “Slain Man’s Lee”, a hollow under the mount adjoining Newark Castle (1830; 1: 372-3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identification of Mrs Cockburn of Ormiston, author of “Flowers of the Forest” (1830; 1: 373)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The location of Mungo Park’s cottage opposite Newark Castle (1830; 1: 374)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moffatwater</th>
<th>his son</th>
<th>Selkirkshire. The scene is, by the common people, supposed to have been the Castle of Newark, upon Yarrow.” (1802; 1: 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sir James Murray of Traquair</td>
<td>Andrew Murray of Cockpool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Walter Scott, Laird of Buckscleuth</td>
<td>James Hop Pringle of Torsonse, royal banner bearer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir James Murray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

Tower of Hangingshaw: “has been demolished for many years. It stood in a romantic and solitary situation, on the classical banks of the River Yarrow. When the mountains around Hangingshaw were covered with the wild copse which constituted a Scottish forest, a more secure stronghold for an outlawed Baron can scarcely be imagined.” (1802; 1: 4).

“Another copy, much more imperfect, is to be found in Glenriddell’s MS. The names are miserably mangled, as is always the case when ballads are taken down from the recitation of persons living at a distance.
mistake of the Reciters, as the family did not enjoy that title till after the date of the Ballad. (1802; 1: 22)

James Boyd, Earl of Arran

Andrew Murray of Cockpool

Sir James Murray of Traquair

James Hop Pringle of Torsonse

from the scenes in which they are laid” (1802; 1: 4)

Acknowledgment of selection from, and comment on sources:
“The Glenriddel MS … hints that the Outlaw was surprised by the treachery of the King … I think the reader will think, with me, that the catastrophe is better, as now printed from Mrs Cockburn’s copy. The deceit, supposed to be practiced on the Outlaw, is unworthy of the military monarch, as he is painted in the ballad, especially if we admit him to be James IV.” (1802; 1: 24)
Appendix 2. Settlement of Dr John Elliot’s Property

Buccleuch Estate papers [NRS, GD224/552/3]

Loose bundle of letters, estate notices, farm lists etc., including applications to Henry Scott, 3rd Duke of Buccleuch concerning the settlement of Dr John Elliot’s property.

Loose papers have been numbered.

Sheet 7.

Letter from Mr T. Ogilvie to William Cuthill Esq. Dalkeith House, Chesters 22 March 1809

My Dear Sir

The Bearer is my friend Mr Shortreed the father of the young man who Dr Elliot the Duke late tenant at Cleughhead in Liddesdale has left Heir to part of his property, which I informed the Duke of when last at Dalkeith House. Mr Shortreed waits upon His Grace to shew him that part of Dr Elliots settlements which relates to his son

I am my dear Sir

Your very faithful servant

+++ Ogilvie

Sheet 8.
Mrs Elliot Redheuch to his Grace Henry Duke of Buccleuch. Langholm Lodge 1809

Unto his grace Henry Duke of Buccleuch &c. The Memorial of Mrs Thomas Elliot, Redheugh Humbly Sheweth,

That the late Robert Elliot of Redheugh, farmed the Cleugh-head and Shaws, Foulshiels, and the Scots side of Kersup, Lands belonging to your Grace, in the District of Liddesdale. He also purchased Middle Moss and Coumes, lands lying in Tarras, and Redheugh all of which he possessed till the day of his death.

The said Robert Elliot had three sons, William, John and Thomas. Some family difference caused the said Robert, to dispose of almost all his property, in favour of John, his second son. The lands in Tarras, Middle Moss and Coums, were left him and all money and goods whatever, excepting the Stock of Kersup which was given to Thomas the youngest who was also made life renter of Redheugh by paying to his Brother six pounds sterling per annum. John was bound by his father’s will to pay £100 to each of his Brother William’s Children. When the said Robert Elliot died, William as oldest son claimed as his right the Farms of Cleugh-head and Shaws and made application for the same. And it is understood that Mr Ogilvie your Grace’s late Chamberlain settled the matter between the Brothers and John was to give William’s children Five in numbers £100 each and to possess the farm as his right. By this agreement the Farms of Cleughhead and Shaws came as heritage to Robert Elliot, son to Thomas, who was the youngest of the three brothers. The Late John Elliot made his settlements as follows. He left to Robert Elliot (who is the son of Thomas his youngest brother) Middlemoss and Coums the Lands in Tarras, and Redheugh in Liddisdale. He entered immediately upon the possession of Redheugh which is a small farm valued at
£37 per annum. But does not enter upon the possession of the Lands of Tarras till of age.

The boy is now Ten years old. This farm is let at £560 per annum but it is let too high.

Robert Shortreed writer near Jedburgh, had been accustomed to do business for the said John Elliot, he was also employed to make his settlements and though no relation yet he is left Executor, of the Will and draws the Rents of the Lands in Tarras for his own behalf[?] Till the Boy is of age. He also is left all the moveables and money whatever except the Stock of Cleugh-head and Shaws which is bequeathed to his son and the household furniture which is left partly to his son, and partly to Mrs Elliot the widow. The lease of the Farm of Cleughhead and Shaws is also conveyed to his son. The said Robert Shortreed and his Cousin John Elliot of Whithaugh are left Curators for the Boy of Redheugh so far as related to John Elliot’s settlements. The said John Elliot left his wife £40 per annum but as she was not a party in the Disposition it does not affect her and of course she comes in for the third of the rents and the half of all the moveables except £400 which is lent upon a Bond.

The settlements are so worded that Robert Elliot the Boy of Redheugh shall pay his uncle’s debts which sum is more than he has hitherto made of the Farm of Foulshiels. Indeed this sum when paid away out of his private property will deprive him in a great measure of doing anything for his two sisters who have no provision whatever made for them.

The Design of your Memorialist laying before your Grace, a Statement of the Settlements of Robert Elliot and his Son John is in order that your Grace would be pleased to pay some attention to the requests made in behalf of her fatherless
child and that if the Farms of Cleughhead and Shaws are already given to Shortreeds son your Grace will be so good as remember her Boy at the termination of the present Lease, that he may reap some advantage to relieve him of the difficulties he will be brought under from paying his Uncle’s debts. And she is emboldened to take this freedom as your Grace has always had a great interest in the rights of your public Family.

Mary Elliot

**Sheet 9.**

Letter from Robert Shortreed, Jedburgh, 12 Jan. 1811

[F.9r]

Newlands Farm

To Charles Riddell of Muselee

Dryburgh

St Boswells Green

Excerpt from a letter received by Robert Shortreed from the Rev.d David Scott minister of Castletoun

7 January 1811

Mr Blacklock and I formerly at the request of Mrs Elliot presented a memorial to his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch respecting the farm of Newlands stating that Robert Elliot Redheugh was heir at Law to said Farm and that according to the terms of His Grace’s letter it could not be dispersed of by Dr Elliot to any person whatever. It was also stated to his Grace that it was reported that his Grace had
ratified Dr Elliot’s settlement by giving his letter to Robert Shortreed to hold the farm for the remainder of the lease in terms of the deed made in favours of his son.

His Grace conversed with Mr +++++ upon the memorial and declared that he had never ratified Dr Elliot’s settlements nor given any letter to Robert Shortreed to hold the farm. When at Edin the other week at the request of Mrs Elliot I called at Dalkeith House in order to learn his Grace’s Pleasure upon the business. After his Grace and Mr Cuthill had some conversation upon the matter I was informed by the latter than his Grace has made no grant of the farm of Newlands to Robert Shortreed and that the heir at Law should take immediate possession of said farm and made Mr Shortreed accountable for the profits of the farm since he took possession thereof.

As the court of session has appointed me Factor pro leco tutoris I am under the duty of taking the regular steps for putting Robert Elliot into the possession of the farm of Newlands as his legal right I trust you will immediately give up all interest in the said farm.

[F.9v]

Jedburgh 12 January 1811

Sir

The prefaced excerpt from Mr Scott’s letter was received by me on the 7th +++. The farm Mr Scott calls on me to surrender is better known by the name of Cleugh head than of Newlands – other farm was by the late Dr Elliot, who for many years had occupied it, left in his deed of settlement to my second son
James whom the Doctor had taken from my house into his own family about Twelve months before he died and to whom he appointed Mr Elliot of Whithaugh and myself guardians. Next week after Dr Elliot’s death which happened in March 1809 I waited on his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch and showed his the Deed of Conveyance of the farm to my son when his Grace told me he would come to a resolution or settle the matter in a short time – in the mean time Mr Elliot & I +++++ with Mrs Elliot the Doctor’s widow for the share of the ++++ considering ourselves warranted in value of the deed to take possession of the farm for my son’s behalf until the Duke’s pleasure was known & of which we heard nothing until I think the month of July following when I was informed by a gentleman who has interested himself with his Grace on the +++ that the Duke has +++ he inclined to prefer my son to the farm for the remaining years of the lease – in consequence of his being +++ for my sons behalf ever since and the rents as you know have been regularly paid by me on account of my son and the receipts granted in his name accordingly.

I was also at the same time informed that you were present at Langholm Lodge when his Grace signified his sentiments as above mentioned and from the very important situation you hold under the Duke I am induced to think you must know more of the matter of fact and of his Grace’s mind on this subject than any other person whatever – In order therefore to be informed what answer Mr Elliot & I ought to give to Mr Scott’s [?]errand I now beg leave to address you the request you will ++++ hear from you as soon as convenient for from my belief & understanding of my son’s possession being approved of founded on what is above related I trust you will readily see. I cannot consistently consent on the part of my son to yield the farm to Mr Scott without orders directly from His
Grace or those acting for him to the purpose – I am respectfully, sir you humble and obedient servant

Robert Shortreed
Appendix 3. Published Paper

The following journal article was published prior to the completion of this study:


The article may be accessed through the following hyperlink:

www.forumjournal.org/article/download/690/971